

“From ‘Humanist’ to ‘Godly’?’: The Changing Social Function of Education in
Early Modern English Grammar Schools”

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Abstract

This thesis explores the social function of England's grammar schools between approximately 1480 and 1640, and how this changed due to the influences of both humanism and religious reform. It explores the grammar school curriculum, including instruction in Latin grammar and in rhetoric, as well as the teaching of Greek, religious instruction, and the general 'experience' of attending school in the early modern period; it also addresses the process of founding and administering a school, the role of the schoolmaster, and the overall purpose of grammar school education, and who within society was able to benefit from that education.

This thesis argues three main points: the first is that, despite becoming part of an educational 'framework' which was meant to help encourage religious understanding, the religious instruction found in a grammar school was in fact a very small proportion of the curriculum compared to the study of classical literature. Second, despite contemporary criticism of the humanist curriculum of grammar and rhetoric taught in the grammar schools, this curriculum remained in place continuously throughout the early modern period. Third, the definition of an 'educated' person was someone who had received instruction in the grammatical and rhetorical curriculum of the grammar schools, whether this was in a grammar school itself, or from a private tutor. The grammar school curriculum, and the ideal educated person which it was meant to produce, was kept very separate from other subjects, such as mathematics and modern languages and instruction in the vernacular. Grammar schools were put to use, officially, in upholding loyalty to the established church, and encouraging the spread of religious knowledge, yet the means to this end was primarily via the teaching of classical, secular, material.

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Declaration

This thesis is entirely my own work. It has not previously been submitted for examination to the University of York, or to any other institution. No part of this thesis has ever been published previously.

INTRODUCTION

England's grammar schools in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries have been a relatively neglected subject in recent decades, despite the fact that education in early modern England is a very rich subject of study which relates so closely to other, more thoroughly-studied, topics: literary scholars look to it to better understand the literature of the period, for example, and religious and Reformation historians must address it when understanding how religious knowledge was spread and enforced, but an actual look inside the grammar school classroom, and out towards its wider social purpose, is much more rare. The topic of education is more commonly used to fill in the gaps in our understanding of literature, religion, and intellectual developments, but less frequently pursued as a subject of study in its own right.

While a great deal of work was done on early modern English grammar schools during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, most notably by A. F. Leach, this body of work has created a number of misconceptions and assumptions about education in early modern England, which are being overturned and re-assessed.¹ These include, in particular, views on the numbers of schools which owe their existence to the Reformation, and on the overall extent of the Reformation's effects on education. The extent of Reformation influence on education might at first seem great, and it was certainly significant, but a closer look at the foundations, curriculum, and level of religious instruction over the

¹ A. F. Leach, *The Schools of Medieval England* (London: Methuen & Co., 1915), particularly 277-93; Leach, *Educational Charters and Documents 598-1909* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1911), xxxvii-xlvii. For an excellent summary of the historiography of education in the middle ages and early Renaissance, see Nicholas Orme, *Medieval Schools: From Roman Britain to Renaissance England* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2006), 3-11.

course of the sixteenth century demonstrates that in fact its influence was much less profound in terms of what the average grammar school boy actually experienced. Additionally, many of the schools which look like new foundations after the 1540s were in fact re-foundations, replacing much older schools whose endowments had come from a chantry or a guild dissolved at the Reformation. These later foundations and re-foundations added to what was already the beginning of a flourishing interest in education, only now taking grammar schools from being local concerns to being part of a more national 'network' under a measure of government, or, in actual practice, diocesan, control for the first time.

There are three main themes in particular that I wish to identify, which appear to characterize grammar school education in this period. The first may seem obvious, but becomes more significant when set in the context of the purpose and function of the grammar schools in this period: the grammar schools' humanist curriculum, despite being part of an educational 'framework' which was meant to help encourage religious understanding, was dominated by classical literature, which took up far more of a schoolboy's time than did religious instruction. The second is that this humanist curriculum remained in place continuously throughout the early modern period: ideas about how to broaden it and make it more relevant for an English context were certainly proposed, but not seriously implemented. Finally, it was the humanist curriculum, devised to produce students who were familiar with the writings of the classical world and the wisdom found therein, and well-practiced in the art of rhetoric, which created an educated person throughout this period. There was a divide between Latin education and vernacular education, the former seen as superior, and while

educational opportunity filtered far enough down the social ladder to prevent this being an elite/non-elite divide, the grammar schools adhered firmly to a curriculum based around language and communication skills, leaving other, more ‘practical’, subjects, such as mathematics and modern languages, to be learned elsewhere, quite separate from the system of instruction in the grammar schools.² This would almost imply two separate directions in education, the rhetorical and the mechanical, further re-enforcing the divide between Latin and vernacular education.

The sources I have drawn upon here include school foundation charters, statutes, and rules, which are largely illustrative of the process of establishing a school and in some cases the government, discipline, and ideal practice therein (the problems with these, however, are that they describe theory and ideal rather than act as evidence of what actually took place); notebooks and commonplace books, because they are the direct products of the classroom, and show us not only what students were actually reading, compared with the ideal curricula listed in statutes, but the ways in which they were approaching those texts and the means by which they absorbed and understood them, as well as how the schoolmaster was delivering a text to his students; and textbooks, for both the content of the books, as well as, where this survives, any marginalia, which again illustrate the students engaging with their work and the techniques they used to learn Latin grammar and rhetoric.

² David Cressy, “Educational Opportunity in Tudor and Stuart England”, *History of Education Quarterly*, 16, 3 (Autumn 1976): 303; Cressy, *Literacy and the Social Order: Reading and Writing in Tudor and Stuart England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 165, 176, 187; see also Mary Thomas Crane, *Framing Authority: Sayings, Self, and Society in Sixteenth-Century England* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 3-38, for a discussion of educational opportunity in the context of keeping commonplace books.

A further source for the schools early in this period are the sentences in Latin and in English ('Latins' and 'vulgaria', respectively) used to practise translation; these are valuable sources because they are in many cases drawn from ordinary schoolboy experience rather than from classical texts, and therefore illustrate both the everyday practice of the grammar schools, as well as the shift away from Latin and English sentences written by the schoolmaster towards a more standard, classical, body of examples.³ Texts written by educational theorists, who were often schoolmasters themselves, are an excellent place to start when getting an understanding of what education was supposed to be for and what kind of institution the grammar school was meant to be, but their main purpose here is largely to highlight the difference between theory and practice, in some cases quite a significant difference, seen in English education in this period. When read in conjunction with descriptions of the curriculum and students' work listed above, they also illustrate the continuity of the grammar schools' humanist curriculum; Mulcaster, Brinsley, Ascham, and later Hartlib, Dury, and Comenius, all had ideas for altering and improving this curriculum and the methods of teaching it, but their ideas were not widely adopted, as the humanist curriculum persisted with little significant alteration well past the mid-seventeenth century.⁴

Geographically, this study focuses on England, including the occasional school founded in Wales by an English founder; the school at Ruthin is one such

³ Orme, *Medieval Schools*, 109-21; Orme, "An Early-Tudor Oxford Schoolbook", *Renaissance Quarterly*, 34, 1 (Spring 1981): 11-21; see also William Nelson, ed., *A Fifteenth-Century Schoolbook, From a Manuscript in the British Museum (MS Arundel 249)* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1956), for an example of an edited collection of English school exercises.

⁴ Richard Mulcaster, *Positions Wherin those Primitive Circumstances be Examined, Which are Necessary for the Training Up of Children* (1581), reprinted 1995 (Bristol: Thoemmes Press, 1995), 24-40; John Brinsley, *Ludus Literarius, or: The Grammar Schoole* (1612), reprinted 1968 (Menston: Scolar Press, 1968), 12-263; Roger Ascham, *The Scholemaster*, (1570), ed R.C. Alston (Menston: Scolar Press, 1967), 3-8.

example, with its very detailed and informative set of statutes. Comparisons with other continental ‘systems’ of education, as well as that of Scotland, will be made throughout, in order to highlight the ways in which England’s education was similar to the rest of Europe, or was adapting the humanist method of teaching in a particularly English way, as well as to illustrate the ways in which the Reformation as it played out in England affected education there.⁵ The chronological focus of this thesis is from approximately 1480 to the 1630s. It begins, in other words, shortly after humanism began to filter its way into the curricula of certain grammar schools, such as Magdalen College School in Oxford, and ends just before the start of the Civil War, when new, alternative, ideas about what education should be for and what should be taught were being proposed. Existing studies do not often cover this exact span of time: the work of Nicholas Orme, for instance, covers the period up until the start of the Elizabethan era, emphasizing the continuities from the later middle ages which were present in education in the early sixteenth century, but finishing before uniformity and Protestant conformity become the norm within the schools. On the other hand, early modern historians who have studied the period’s education in some depth, such as David Cressy and Ian Green, tend to begin in the latter half of the sixteenth century and move on to the end of the seventeenth.⁶ In order to

⁵ Gerald Strauss, *Luther’s House of Learning: Indoctrination of the Young in the German Reformation* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978), 3, 11-16; Paul F. Grendler, *Schooling in Renaissance Italy: Literacy and Learning 1300-1600* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989), 332-37, 357, 366-80.

⁶ For the former approach, see Orme, *Medieval Schools*; Orme, *Education and Society in Medieval and Renaissance England* (London: Hambledon Press, 1989); Jo Ann Hoeppner Moran, *The Growth of English Schooling, 1340-1548: Learning, Literacy, and Laicization in Pre-Reformation York Diocese* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985). For the latter approach, see in particular Cressy, *Education in Tudor and Stuart England* (London: Edward Arnold, 1975); Cressy, *Literacy and the Social Order*; Cressy, “Educational Opportunity”; Ian Green, *Humanism and Protestantism in Early Modern English Education* (Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2009).

understand the transition from medieval to Renaissance humanist education and eventual attempts to move away from that humanist education, in the context of other intellectual and religious changes, which are the main aims of this thesis, it seems most useful to look at the entire sixteenth century and the decades on either end, from the end of the middle ages to the start of the Civil Wars, in order to situate the educational developments of the sixteenth century in a wider historical context, the better to see how Renaissance humanist education was different from what came before and after, and how enduring its influence was.

The term ‘humanism’, or ‘humanist’, in this thesis is meant in a specifically English context. ‘Humanism’ itself is a nineteenth-century term; early modern terms included the classical *studia humanitatis*, the Italian *umanista*, and the English term ‘humanity’ as distinct from ‘divinity’, but humanism will serve here to describe the approach to learning based around the study of classical Greco-Roman texts and languages, which developed in Italy and spread north across Europe.⁷ Humanism as it specifically developed in England might almost be seen as a hybrid of the Italian and northern European (‘Erasmian’) variants of humanist learning. The humanist veneration of classical texts and the *ad fontes* approach to such sources which had developed in Italy was brought to England in the 1470s and 1480s by scholars who had travelled to Italy, such as Thomas Linacre and William Grocyn; upon their return home, these individuals influenced the academic community first in Oxford, and gradually the leading grammar schools, between the 1490s and 1520s.⁸ It was to Erasmus, however, that

⁷ Hanan Yoran, *Between Utopia and Dystopia: Erasmus, Thomas More, and the Humanist Republic of Letters* (Plymouth: Lexington Books, 2010), 18; M.L. Clarke, *Classical Education in Britain 1500-1900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1959), 22-23.

⁸ Orme, *Medieval Schools*, 123.

‘English’ humanism owed much of its character, particularly after his visit to the country in 1499; once the scholarly methods and ideals of humanism had been introduced to England from Italy, English humanists began to look mainly to Erasmus for inspiration and guidance, in order to bring the existing study of Latin, and the ideal study of Greek, up to a new, and in their own view, higher, standard.⁹

The type of humanism which shaped the ideal grammar school curriculum, then, was largely based on the northern European humanism embodied most strongly in Erasmus’s work. This northern European approach placed more emphasis on an accurate understanding of Scripture, and of classical knowledge to further Christian ends, than did Italian humanism, which placed more emphasis on education for citizenship; the divide is not entirely clear-cut, but the differences are certainly visible.¹⁰ Humanism and Protestantism in England and northern Europe would share this commitment to greater religious understanding and the general social improvement it could bring about – hence the ‘Humanist’ to ‘Godly’ of our title – and it was this ‘Protestant humanism’ which informed the curricula and ideals of English grammar schools throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. ‘Social humanism’ is the term used by Rosemary O’Day to describe this type of humanism and its emphasis on both classical and Christian education as a positive influence on society; as we will see, this vision of education as, in O’Day’s view, ‘a force for change or for stability’ was one which

⁹ James McConica, *English Humanists and Reformation Politics under Henry VIII and Edward VI* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1965), 42-44; Clarke, *Classical Education in Britain*, 4; Lucille Kekewich, *The Impact of Humanism* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2000), 83.

¹⁰ Kekewich, *Impact of Humanism*, 61; Yoran, *Erasmus, Thomas More, and the Humanist Republic of Letters*, 59, 74-75.

was expressed by school founders and by the English church and government.¹¹ English humanism contained elements of both the northern and Italian variants: the improving of religious understanding promoted by Erasmus, the ideal of education for active citizenship embraced by Italian humanist education, and the classical linguistic standards of both.

While histories of individual grammar schools, and strictly education-focused studies have become rare in recent years, many recent explorations of the grammar school curriculum and experience, the subjects of two of my chapters, have come from a literary, rather than strictly historical background. Many of these build on the work of T. W. Baldwin in the 1940s, looking for the ways in which Shakespeare's writing was influenced by his education, and using his experience (about which we actually know relatively little) in the grammar school at Stratford as the starting point for a study of sixteenth-century English education, or for interpreting his plays and poems.¹² This has its merits: it highlights how influential the humanist curriculum could be in a schoolboy's later career, and how much the stories and figures from this curriculum were familiar and recognizable to a range of people; it is also, understandably, tempting to use a well-known figure from the period, whose writings are extant, as a lens through which to view the education of the time. However, despite these important

¹¹ Rosemary O'Day, *Education and Society 1500-1900: The Social Foundations of Education in Early Modern Britain* (London: Longman, 1982), xii, 25, 89.

¹² T. W. Baldwin, *William Shakspeare's Small Latine and Lesse Greeke*, (2 vols., Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1944), I, 464-753 and II, throughout; Baldwin, *William Shakespeare's Petty School* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1943). See more recently David Armitage, Conal Condren, and Andrew Fitzmaurice, eds., *Shakespeare and Early Modern Political Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), particularly 197-216, 234-52, 253-70; Colin Burrow, *Shakespeare and Classical Antiquity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 1-20; Lynn Enterline, *Shakespeare's Schoolroom: Rhetoric, Discipline, Emotion* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012); Quentin Skinner, *Forensic Shakespeare* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

benefits, studies such as Baldwin's and those who have come after him tend to be very literary-oriented, which, though this view can be helpful in understanding approaches to commonly-read grammar school texts, tend to be less concerned with much of the historical context with which I am interested. While Shakespeare and his education are still useful to draw upon when trying to understand the scope and breadth and use of grammar school instruction, I have included the notebooks and commonplace books of lesser-known, even anonymous, schoolboys among my manuscript sources.

Learning Latin, while it was not the only purpose of the grammar school, formed the main part of its curriculum. Chapter 1 examines the texts used to teach Latin, and the methods employed to practise it. In this regard, there was a shift from schoolmasters creating their own material to practise Latin, alongside (often) medieval texts, towards one standard textbook used by all the grammar schools in England after 1540 (Lily's *Grammar*), and towards classical texts as the main source for practising Latin. The descriptions of curricula found in timetables, school rules, and foundation documents indicate a certain similarity, usually deliberate, between the curricula of different schools, but also a sense that the schoolmaster had some say in choosing which authors were studied, giving us only a general picture of a grammar school curriculum.

Through their emphasis on speaking Latin, and on speaking well before an audience, the grammar schools taught the art of rhetoric, a skill which was applicable in many circumstances after finishing grammar school, but most commonly to those headed for a profession, whether secular or ecclesiastical. It is also a subject on which there *is* in fact more recent work, by scholars such as

Peter Mack and Markku Peltonen.¹³ While practising Latin by speaking it in the classroom was not new in the sixteenth century, the greater importance placed on rhetoric is a clear indication of the influence of humanism on the grammar school curriculum. Despite the role of grammar schools in upholding the established religion, and in training future clergyman, the curriculum was largely classical. This somewhat calls into question the assumption that schools were often founded to produce good Christian subjects. Another theme discussed in this chapter, therefore, is how to reconcile classical and Christian literature: were classical Latin authors studied for the content of their work, and the lessons to be learned from them, or for the style of their writing? While Christian teaching was certainly present in a schoolboy's timetable, it was very much overshadowed by the classical authors used to teach grammar and rhetoric. Finally, what was the Latin for, exactly, and why was Latin specifically the main subject of the schools? Examining what the grammar schools did not teach may be useful in determining this: they did not, for instance, teach anything mathematical: if one wanted practice in arithmetic, or in casting accounts, one would have to learn these skills outside the grammar schools. Theology and law were studied after completing the grammar school curriculum. What we would today call 'vocational' training, then, was kept out of the grammar school- or was it? Were the 'communication skills', or rhetorical instruction, provided there in fact a specific training for careers in government, whether local or national?

¹³ See for instance, Peter Mack, *Renaissance Argument: Valla and Agricola in the Traditions of Rhetoric and Dialectic* (Leiden: Brill, 1993); Mack, *Elizabethan Rhetoric: Theory and Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); Markku Peltonen, *Rhetoric, Politics, and Popularity in Pre-Revolutionary England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

Chapter 2 explores the process of establishing a grammar school, and how this changed over time. It begins with some of the historiographical background on the apparent expansion of education in this period, arguing that while the English Reformation and the influence of humanist ideas about learning and teaching did encourage the growth of education in this period, an increased interest in founding grammar schools had begun to appear much earlier, in the fifteenth century, and the schools themselves began to appear more uniform in terms of both their organization and curricula. This view was initially put forward by Leach, albeit in terms which gave far too little credit to the Reformation and assumed too much about medieval education, but it has been tempered by subsequent historians, particularly Joan Simon in the 1960s, and more recently Nicholas Orme; this more recent point of view is a more convincing line of thinking.¹⁴ The new schools were more controllable by the English church and state, were given the new purpose of enforcing religious understanding and conformity, and were more intensely focused on rhetorical training than previously. This chapter then examines how schools became caught up in more general religious changes, looking at how they were affected by the dissolution and chantry acts. An increasing sense of uniformity in education is evident in this period: while England was still far away from a ‘national system’ of education in the early modern period, many of the schools founded or re-founded during this time appear very similar, in part due to founders modeling their schools on existing ones, but also because of the foundation of ‘Royal’ grammar schools, as disused chantries, or schools formerly associated with religious houses, were

¹⁴ Joan Simon, *Education and Society in Tudor England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1966), vii; Orme, *Medieval Schools*, 5-8.

transformed into grammar schools founded and administered nominally by the English state, and in practice by the Church of England.

Prior to the sixteenth century, grammar schools had been very localized in their administration and methods of teaching, but one of the major changes which occurred in the sixteenth century was that the state took on a more prominent role in founding grammar schools, with administration undertaken at a diocesan level; essentially, an older system of education was adapted to serve the needs of Reformation and post-Reformation England, with a greater focus on maintaining a Protestant, English, church and creating a network of similarly-educated students prepared to serve the church and commonwealth. There was no official 'system' of education as yet, but there was certainly a greater regulation of schools, as grammar schools moved beyond the education of future clergy, or charitable teaching of the poor, towards educating those who would assume authority in a newly Protestant England. While the curriculum of these schools was largely classical and non-Christian, the methods and purposes of their foundation did reflect religious concerns. The motives for founding and administering a school appear very religious both pre- and post-Reformation, but this does not always match the content of the curriculum.

The third chapter examines the role of the schoolmaster, his qualifications and duties, and the changing role schoolmasters played both in education and in society more broadly. We cannot speak of schoolmastering as a profession in this period as there was as yet no standard recruitment or training and little sense of professional solidarity, yet we can call it a career, or, more commonly, a phase

thereof.¹⁵ Teaching remained less well-paid and less esteemed than a career within the church, yet schoolmasters took on an important role in the sixteenth century, that of ensuring correct religious instruction. The importance of this role was not always recognized at the time by the schoolmasters and the parents of their students, but from the care which was taken to license schoolmasters, and the strict rules laid down for their conduct, it is clear that officially, their role was viewed as important. This chapter also addresses whether schoolmasters were ordained or not, and whether or not they were married, and how this changed over time and why. This tells us a great deal about the type of career ‘schoolmastering’ was meant to be, whether a religious one or not, and about the importance attached to the role, whether it was something desirable to pursue all of one’s life, or merely a stepping-stone towards something more prestigious, such as a career in the church, or even a means to avoid taking orders.

The licensing of schoolmasters to ensure their religious conformity was a new development in the sixteenth century: licensing focused on their religion and character, rather than their level of education. Schoolmasters often played an important role in creating the texts which were used in their classrooms; early in this period they wrote their own textbooks and Latin exercises, while later they supplemented the officially prescribed grammar text and published dictionaries with material of their own to make the curriculum more accessible for their students and easier to teach for themselves. Finally, there is a comparison with the role of schoolmasters on the continent, using the examples of Italian and German

¹⁵ Cressy, “A Drudgery of Schoolmasters: The Teaching Profession in Elizabethan and Stuart England”, in *The Professions in Early Modern England*, ed. Wilfrid Prest (London: Croom Helm, 1987), 129; Richard L. DeMolen, “Richard Mulcaster and the Profession of Teaching in Sixteenth-Century England”, *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 35, 1 (March 1974): 126.

education: in all three contexts, the emphasis was on teaching humanist civic virtue and good citizenship, despite a greater amount of Christian instruction required in German schools and often a lesser degree of university education among Italian schoolmasters.¹⁶ The Italian and German schoolmasters were held in a similar esteem to their English counterparts: highly regarded for their vital service to society in theory, but receiving little recognition for their efforts in practice. The English attitudes towards schoolmasters demonstrate that officially they were instrumental in upholding the English church establishment, but in practice, the importance of their role and the work involved in fulfilling it were not always recognized by the students or their parents.¹⁷

Chapter 4 explores what it was like to attend a grammar school in early modern England, and what was expected of the boys who attended. It begins with an analysis of the type of Latin exercises the boys did, as these were not only an important part of the work they did in school, but the content of these exercises reflects what the boys might have been interested in or able to relate to, and as such they are valuable sources for our understanding of the grammar school experience. While textbooks and pedagogical methods are discussed in the chapter about the Latin curriculum, this chapter examines the types of Latin the boys were reading, and the challenges inherent in teaching classical, potentially immoral, material, to impressionable Christian schoolboys. There was a shift by the mid-sixteenth century away from using Latin material written by individual

¹⁶ See in particular Grendler, *Schooling in Renaissance Italy*, 36-40; Strauss, *Luther's House of Learning*, 21-25; Strauss, ed., *Enacting the Reformation in Germany* (Aldershot: Variorum, 1993), 82-85; Robert Black, *Humanism and Education in Medieval and Renaissance Italy: Tradition and Innovation in Latin Schools from the Twelfth to the Fifteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 29, 35, 43.

¹⁷ Thomas Morrice, *An Apology for Schoolmasters* (1619), reprinted 1976 (Amsterdam: Theatrum Orbis Terrarum, 1976), sig. D1 v.; Brinsley, *Ludus Literarius*, 2-3; Mulcaster, *Positions*, 231.

schoolmasters for their own classrooms, and towards a more uniform, and more carefully controlled, curriculum dominated by a standard grammar text and shared to a great degree by schoolboys across England. The process of learning Latin, as perceived and experienced by the schoolboys themselves, is the focus in this chapter, rather than the teaching methods used by the schoolmaster, although these do receive some attention, particularly Latin speaking and orations, as well as the use of Latin sentences describing familiar schoolboy life, discussed above.

Diversions such as plays and play-days, barring-out, and cockfighting, and their purpose in the school year, are discussed next: the social hierarchy of the wider world was reflected in the school room, the school being a microcosm of this wider social structure, and the diversions as much as the academic work illustrate this. This hierarchy was also reflected in the punishments used within the classroom, which are set in the context of contemporary views of authority, childhood, and youth.¹⁸ Finally, who were the scholars of the grammar schools? What was their social background and eventual career? It is difficult to say for the majority of boys, but the general pattern is that they came from the middling sort and entered the professions (mostly the clergy, but sometimes law, or even medicine). We will return to this question in the final chapter, about who was able to make use of their education in the manner envisioned by humanist educators, and how the grammar school curriculum fit with the requirements for holding various public offices. The purpose of this chapter is largely to put the school

¹⁸ Rebecca W. Bushnell, *A Culture of Teaching: Early Modern Humanism in Theory and Practice* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1996), 23-31; Paul Griffiths, Adam Fox, and Steve Hindle, *The Experience of Authority in Early Modern England* (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 1996), 146-86, 187-212.

experience into the context of early modern society more generally, in order to understand the purpose behind some of its practices.

While Latin was the main component of the grammar school curriculum, religious instruction was also an important element, whether through direct teaching of the catechism and attendance at church, or more indirectly through visitations of the schools and the licensing of the schoolmasters for their religious conformity. As the church came more closely under the control of the state, so did education. Chapter 5 discusses the ways in which grammar school boys received their religious instruction. Prior to the mid-sixteenth century, there was no conscious effort on the part of the state to use the grammar schools to implement basic religious instruction, as neither government nor church had hitherto taken a formal interest in education.¹⁹ After this time, however, the number of schools founded by senior clergymen increased, a standard catechism was imposed in 1570 on all schools alongside the standard Lily's *Grammar*, and school rules and foundation documents frequently specified that the boys attend church on Sundays with the schoolmaster, as well as outlined the prayers they should use in the classroom.²⁰ This is then compared with religious instruction on the continent: German and Italian education mostly, but also that of France. In comparison to these, English schools were teaching a rather small amount of religious material.

¹⁹ Orme, *Medieval Schools*, 288.

²⁰ Green, *Humanism and Protestantism*, 268-90; see also the statutes for Archbishop Holgate's School in York, Hawkshead, and Dorchester-on-Thames for particularly detailed descriptions of the prayers said in the classroom.

England was perhaps less clear on what it wanted to implement in terms of doctrine compared to many places on the continent.²¹

While the grammar textbook and the catechism were under strict government control, most of the material studied in the schools was not subject to any control save that of the schoolmaster: looking at the texts studied in the classroom, there is very little religious content, but when we consider the attitudes taken towards those texts then we see an increasing concern with Christian morality. Yet there was no serious move in the English schools towards reading Christian authors, despite efforts early in the century by John Colet to read the Church Fathers at St Paul's School – the grammar school as an institution was linked to the church, through foundation, through the licensing of the schoolmaster, and through the religious practices which shaped the school week, but what was being taught within it was in fact very classical; the humanist curriculum appears not to have been subordinate to an understanding of Christian doctrine.

Latin and religious principles formed the core of the grammar school curriculum, but the ideal humanist curriculum also contained ancient Greek. Chapter 6 sets out the reasons why this was so: humanist scholars praised the writing of the ancient Greek authors, and the potential of the Greek language to improve one's understanding and use of Latin; the ability to read the New Testament in Greek, rather than in Latin translation, was also an important motive. However, when examining descriptions of school curricula, as well as extant

²¹ Strauss, *Luther's House of Learning*, 5-8, 166-68; Green, *Humanism and Protestantism*, 271, 285; Grendler, *Schooling in Renaissance Italy*, 332-337; Peter Marshall, ed., *The Impact of the English Reformation 1500-1640* (London: Arnold, 1997), introduction, 5.

school timetables, it is very rare to find evidence that Greek was regularly taught in the grammar schools. If Greek is mentioned in such sources, it is rarely with as much care and detail as Latin: it is listed briefly, as being read or spoken, but with little of the detail on how to teach it that one sees with Latin. Greek, then, was part of an ideal humanist curriculum, yet makes very few appearances in contemporary descriptions of grammar school curricula. Was it simply an ideal, an ambition for the school? When these sources mention which Greek works should be read, these were classical authors, with the New Testament sometimes added to this list. Only the best-endowed schools could teach Greek in practice as the texts required to teach it were not commonly printed in England, and few schoolmasters knew the language well enough to teach it.²² Greek was being taught in the English universities in the sixteenth century, but not to as high a level as Latin. The chapter includes a short section about teaching Hebrew, another one of the three learned languages necessary for understanding Scripture: this was even more rare in the schools, and, like Greek, it was usually reserved for the brightest students who were willing to learn it. Hebrew was studied on the continent, but in universities, not schools, and England was slower in implementing it in its universities; it was mostly studied by those bound for a career in the church, or by those from particularly ‘godly’ families.²³ What this chapter illustrates is that, in practice, the humanist ideal had to be adapted to the circumstances of English

²² Anthony Grafton and Lisa Jardine, *From Humanism to the Humanities: Education and the Liberal Arts in Fifteenth- and Sixteenth-Century Europe* (London: Duckworth, 1986), 99-121; Green, *Humanism and Protestantism*, 254-59.

²³ Green, *Humanism and Protestantism*, 260-61; see also the statutes for the grammar schools at Giggleswick, Blackburn, and Westminster, as well as Archbishop Holgate’s school in York, for the cursory ways in which Hebrew might be mentioned in school statutes.

grammar schools, and that certain elements of this curriculum could not always be followed through in this context.

The final chapter addresses the way in which the humanist curriculum was, or could be, used in practice, and what defined an educated person, and looks at the holding of public office and whether this was dependent on having received a grammar school education. Just how far down the social scale did a grammar school education filter? It is difficult to determine how many boys were able to receive this type of education, for estimating the numbers of schools and the numbers of students attending them is extremely difficult.²⁴ Nevertheless it appears that a grammar school education was a possibility for a surprisingly large proportion of the male population, perhaps as much as a quarter, while a vague knowledge of the literature and authors of the humanist curriculum was held by a wider proportion still, along with literacy in English. There is a divide to be observed, of course, between those literate in Latin and those literate in the vernacular, but this was not necessarily a divide between the elite and non-elite, as the opportunity for a grammar school education was not confined solely to the most privileged.

In theory, education was to be made available to even poor boys, but in practice this was not followed through, as wealthy parents began to appreciate the value of a grammar school education for their sons, who in some schools were crowding out the poorer students. Despite this, by the beginning of the seventeenth century, contemporaries perceived a problem of over-education, of

²⁴ See for instance, Orme, *Medieval Schools*, 167, 244-50; Lawrence Stone, "The Educational Revolution in England, 1500-1640", *Past and Present*, no. 28 (July 1964): 49-70; Stone, "Social Mobility in England, 1500-1700", *Past and Present*, no. 33 (April 1966): 20, 44-5; Cressy, "Educational Opportunity", 313; Cressy, *Education in Tudor and Stuart England*, 8-10.

too many people receiving a humanist education and then not being able to make use of that education, having become overqualified for more humble occupations.²⁵ Yet the system of humanist education provided in England's grammar schools remained largely unchanged throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; while there were calls to provide alternatives to the classical system of education, these were rarely implemented in practice. The definition of an educated person remained similarly stable over this period, being one who had been trained in the art of rhetoric through the medium of classical texts. Was education intended as preparation for public service to the commonwealth? Ostensibly it was, and indeed those in certain offices, like that of JP, MP, or clergyman, were able to make use of the skills taught in school. Yet it need not always have been used for this purpose, and nor did such service require such education. Grammar school instruction did not always have to lead to a profession or the holding of public office, but for certain professions it was a necessary requirement. While grammar schools were playing a role in upholding the established church and in spreading religious knowledge, they were also playing a part in preparing boys for both religious and secular careers and instilling in them a sense of duty and devotion to the good of society. The means to this end, however, was far less 'godly' than perhaps many school founders or governors were willing to admit.

²⁵ Francis Bacon was the most vocal in expressing this view, although it is present, albeit in a more moderate form, in Mulcaster, *Positions*, 141. Francis Bacon, "Advice to the King Touching Sutton's Estate, 1611", in *The Works of Francis Bacon: Volume 11 – The Letters and the Life 4*, ed. James Spedding, Robert Leslie Ellis, and Douglas Denon Heath (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 252-54.

CHAPTER ONE

THE LATIN CURRICULUM

Latin was the primary component of the grammar school curriculum. It was not, however, the main purpose of the schools; their role in teaching the official religion, and in inculcating good behaviour, obedience, and a sense of duty towards the commonweal, is described elsewhere, and receives just as much emphasis in contemporary descriptions of grammar schools as does the Latin curriculum. The way in which this Latin was taught was influenced by humanism, while both the Reformation and the increasing use of print brought a sense of uniformity to what was being taught. The basic curriculum of a grammar school was affected very minimally by England's religious changes; the textbooks which were used to teach a traditional curriculum of Latin grammar and Greek and Roman authors did change, notably with the introduction of Lily's *Grammar* in 1540, but learning to write, read and speak Latin were the goals of a grammar school education continuously throughout the Tudor period and into the seventeenth century. The Reformation was a factor in introducing a uniform grammar and catechism textbook, but it was the humanist influence which was more responsible for the changing types of examples and standards of Latin taught in schools. This chapter will first discuss the textbooks found in a grammar school, from the basic grammar texts of the lower forms to the Roman authors read by the older students, before moving on to the techniques employed by the

students to practise their Latin, both spoken and written. The relationship between classical and Christian values in classroom literature is an important theme here, as well as the question of whether classical authors were read more for style or for content, as well as the benefits and limitations of imitating authors who wrote in a classical context. Finally, this chapter will discuss what a grammar school did *not* teach: Latin grammar and rhetoric were taught at the expense of other subjects like mathematics and modern languages, which highlights a divide between the ‘academic’ (and humanist) and the ‘mechanical’ branches of instruction.

Textbooks, and the Introduction of a Standard Grammar Book

At the beginning of the sixteenth century, there were a few Latin textbooks in particular which were commonly known and used by schoolmasters; these were medieval grammars, often in verse to aid memorization of their contents, by continental grammarians such as Priscian, Donatus, or Alexander of Ville-Dieu, written during the late Roman era or during the middle ages. Latin was generally practiced by means of short sentences called *vulgaria* (so-called because they were in English, to be translated into Latin), compiled by individual schoolmasters, in some cases published but in many cases used only in a particular school. Humanist ideas about the purity of classical Latin over its medieval counterpart led to a gradual change in the type of Latin that was taught and the standard to which the boys were expected to work, but the methods of the teaching and the texts used in mastering the basics of Latin grammar were still very much those of the medieval schools. In 1540, an official textbook was

prescribed for use in all of England's grammar schools, *The Short Introduction of Grammar*, by William Lily, high master of St Paul's School. This text, as well as Lily's *Brevissima institutio grammatices*, published with it (the two are hereafter referred to as Lily's *Grammar*), was accompanied by poems on Christian morality, by Lily himself and by Erasmus. After mastering the rules of Latin grammar with the help of this standard text, the boys moved on to study the texts of the classical Roman authors (or Greek authors in Latin translation). Even well into the seventeenth century, this Henrician-era text was still in use as the standard Latin grammar textbook.

Lily's *Grammar* was meant to introduce a sense of pedagogical uniformity; individual schoolmasters had traditionally tended to use different grammar texts, and if a student had to move to a different school, as they were sometimes forced to do because of disease, or the death of the schoolmaster, the variety of textbooks in use made learning grammar more difficult. The imposition of a uniform grammar book solved the problem of 'the diversitie of grammers and teachynges' allowing students to 'easily attaine the rudyments of the Latyn tounge', but as it contained the official catechism, it could also impose uniformity in a religious sense.¹ This is not directly obvious from reading the dedication to the reader; the 1542 edition of the *Introduction to the eyght partes of speche* refers to Henry VIII's apparent interest in the education of the young; while it exhorts schoolmasters to 'apply your scholars in lernyng and godly education', it makes no actual mention of religious uniformity, only uniformity in the sense of all

¹ William Lily, *An Introduction to the Eyght Partes of Speche, and the Construction of the Same Compiled and Sette Forthe by the Commau[n]dement of our Most Gracious Soverayne Lorde The King* (Thomas Berthelet, 1542), preface, Early English Books Online.

scholars learning their Latin from the same standard book, something which would have been much more difficult to enforce a few decades earlier when it was still common to use grammar texts in manuscript form. Later editions of Lily praise the implementation of a standard textbook as a ‘godly act’ by the king, and the teaching of it as an act worthy of both royal and divine approval.²

Lily’s *Grammar* was part of a wider movement towards standardizing what was taught in grammar schools. The English state, and by extension the church, was beginning to take a greater interest in education, as it was with religious instruction. The state, by whose authority Lily’s *Grammar* was declared the official grammar text, had not been directly concerned with education before the sixteenth century, except in isolated cases, but now, following on from its efforts to control religious instruction, it imposed an official Latin textbook on all the country’s grammar schools. Even before the prescription of Lily’s *Grammar*, a sense of imitation had been developing between various grammar schools. Most smaller schools tended to follow the practices (generally the rules, curriculum, or number of forms) of either Eton and Winchester (Eton was itself based on Winchester), or of St Paul’s and Cardinal Wolsey’s school in Ipswich, which had borrowed from the rules and curriculum of St Paul’s. By 1530, Winchester and Eton were teaching the same curriculum, which was then adopted by the King’s School, Canterbury in 1541, which in turn was taken up by Worcester grammar school in 1544.³ These types of connections are found in other schools, in all areas

² Lily, *A Short Introduction of Grammar Generally to be Used* (Francis Flower, 1574), EEBO.

³ Baldwin, *Shakspeare’s Small Latine*, I, 170.

of the country – even the words introducing the curriculum for Sir John Deane’s School, Northwich, in Cheshire, are identical to those in the statutes for St Paul’s.⁴

The fact that the same bishops tended to be appointed to make school arrangements also contributed to the similarity of many curricula and statutes within a particular diocese.⁵ In other words, the bishop of a certain diocese might be in charge of the visitations of several different schools, or in charge of appointing the schoolmaster at more than one school, as with Holgate’s three schools in Yorkshire. This process of imitating the ‘great’ schools is discussed in great detail in T. W. Baldwin’s *Shakspeare’s Small Latin and Less Greek*, and, read in conjunction with a number of school curricula, Baldwin’s argument is largely correct. He argues for a standardizing of the curricula in English grammar schools during the reign of Edward VI, when many schools were either founded, or, in the case of existing schools, re-founded as royal grammar schools. This was furthered in Elizabeth’s reign, as schoolmasters followed a method of teaching which had been ‘solidified’ by the middle of the sixteenth century.⁶

Baldwin does, however, think that one can therefore know exactly what a given school taught, his aim being to understand what was being taught at Stratford-upon-Avon school in the 1560s and 1570s. This is not always easy, or possible: we know that all schools were supposed to be using Lily’s *Grammar*, but when it came to the classical texts to be studied, many statutes might list a few specific authors or titles, but then follow this with ‘or some other author fit to the

⁴ Cheshire Record Office, Chester, SL 300/2/32, statutes of Sir John Deane’s School, Northwich, c. 1558.

⁵ Baldwin, *Shakspeare’s Small Latine*, I, 303.

⁶ Baldwin, *Shakspeare’s Small Latine*, I, 320.

purpose', or a similar phrase. Sometimes it was up to the schoolmaster to choose the authors read in his classroom, if they were not specified in the statutes. In such cases, no matter how much evidence we have that a school was following the 'Eton system', or the St Paul's system, if the schoolmaster had some say in what his students read, we will not necessarily know the exact curriculum of that school. What might a schoolmaster have chosen? What was there for him to choose from? This was determined by the texts that were available, printed and sold, at a certain time or place, and perhaps by the ability, or even religious persuasion, of the master himself. The curriculum would probably not be radically different from most other schools, as regular visitations by the governors or clergy would put a stop to any unsuitable elements in the curriculum, but it would change slightly, depending on the wealth of the school and the ability of the master and the students under him. The aims of the curriculum would remain similar, and as there was an increasing degree of uniformity in the schools, one can build up a very general picture of the grammar school curriculum during the sixteenth century.

The official grammar text by William Lily was used constantly after 1540, throughout the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, and was so commonly known that school rules often speak of 'the grammar commonly in use', widely known to mean Lily's *Grammar*. The content of the book itself changed somewhat during the middle of the century as other texts, such as Nowell's Catechism, came into use, but Lily's *Grammar* was essentially a very conservative book, rooted in its pre-Reformation context, containing secular and classical content alongside its religious material. It is very similar in content to the *Paules Accidence* in use at St

Paul's shortly before the introduction of Lily's *Grammar* as the official text, although this is likely because Lily himself had been involved in the writing of the St Paul's book; the *Paules Accidence* contained the Apostles' Creed, Lord's Prayer, Ave Maria, Ten Commandments, seven sacraments, and 'Precepts of Living', all in English (this was originally the material of Colet's 'Catecyzon'), followed by the parts of speech explained in English, and finally a section entitled 'To Make Latyne' (Lily's contribution).⁷ The early editions of Lily's *Grammar* resemble this closely. Certain 'Godly Lessons', similar to the early 'Precepts of Living' were added early in the 1540s: an edition of 1542 contains these lessons, short sentences on Christian morals, in English and Latin, with neither a distinctly Catholic nor a Protestant tone, in addition to Lily's *Carmen de moribus* and Erasmus's poem *Christiani hominis*, both of which are more conservative in tone. The boys could presumably use these Godly Lessons as they would use vulgaria, for translation, but also for the moral lessons they would impart, as they emphasize general Christian morality rather than specific points of doctrine.⁸

These Godly Lessons were dropped in the 1560s, shortly before the publication of Nowell's official Catechism in 1570. The *Veni creator*, the canticle sung every morning by the boys of St Paul's, was also dropped, as was the Latin prayer for God's help in keeping the divine law; this was either due to the prayer's Catholic nature, or, suggests Ian Green, due to printers cutting corners.⁹ The Latin prayers, the Ten Commandments, the Apostles' Creed in verse, and the Lord's

⁷ John Colet, *Paules Accidence Johannis Coleti theologi, olim decani diui Pauli, aeditio, una cum quibusdam G. Lili Grammatices rudementis* (T. Raynalde, 1539), EEBO.

⁸ Lily, *Introduction to the Eyght Partes of Speche*, sig. Fiii v.- Fvi r.

⁹ Green, *Humanism and Protestantism*, 150.

Prayer, were all removed as well, although new graces and prayers for the schoolroom were added in their place in the 1560s; this was not so much because the prayers in the older editions were in Latin and resembled Catholic ritual, but more because Nowell's catechism contained the same material already. Most of the classical content of Lily survived after the 1570s, as did the graces for meals and for the end of the school day. The *Carmen de moribus*, written by William Lily for his students at St Paul's, was also included after the 1570s. It imitated the format, style, and purpose of Cato's *Distichs*, exhorting the boys to memorize sentences of good advice written in good-quality Latin. These 'moral epigrams', of which Lily was among the earliest English supporters, contained little religious material, and editions of Lily's text after 1570 no longer contained the Godly Lessons.¹⁰

From Lily, then, the boys received instruction in grammatical rules, examples of practice Latin sentences, and a dose of moral instruction. The *Grammar* was supplemented by other texts, besides the original classical literature. Vocabularies and dictionaries are frequently listed among the books given to schools, to aid in composition of themes, letters, and speeches. Like the *Grammar* itself, these might similarly be used without reference to religion. John Stanbridge's *Vocabula* was printed first in around 1505, but continued to be printed, albeit less frequently, until the 1640s, long after the works by his contemporaries, and even the *Vulgaria* of Stanbridge himself, had ceased to be printed and used. The lettering in these editions changes from blackletter to italic, but otherwise the editions between the beginning and end of the sixteenth century

¹⁰ Green, *Humanism and Protestantism*, 150-3.

are essentially the same, only changing slightly in format during the 1620s. The arrangement of the words is retained, and with the same types of words: parts of the body, illnesses, household objects, food, occupations, plants and animals, clothing, and even words relating to war and to music. The words are neither particularly classical, nor specifically Catholic or reformed; they are simply words which would be familiar to an English schoolboy of the sixteenth century, but without any reference to religious practice. This means they could be used for reference throughout the century, although there were other, similar, vocabulary texts published later in the century.

A grammar school would often possess a dictionary, sometimes more than one, used in common by all the students, for reference. The register book kept by the governors of St Bee's School, Cumbria, mentions several such books: Cowper's dictionary, a 'Nizolius', Barrett's *Alvearie*, Hasill's *Lexicon*, Textor's *Epithets*, a 'Callipine of the best edition', Johannus Scapulus' *Lexicon* (1586), Stephanus' Latin thesaurus in three volumes, and commentaries on Horace and Plautus.¹¹ Cowper's dictionary (1573) and the 'Callipine' were Latin dictionaries, the two *Lexica* were from Greek into Latin; the *Alvearie* (1580) was a dictionary in four languages, named for the comparison of students gathering wise *sententia* with bees gathering honey. The 'Nizolius' (or, more properly, the *Thesaurus sive ciceronianus*) was a dictionary of all the words and terms found in Cicero's writing, first published on the continent in 1535 and named for its author, the Italian humanist Marius Nizolius. The Nizolius was useful for anyone who wanted to write as well as Cicero, or to write just like him, illustrating his dominant

¹¹ Cumbria Record Office, Whitehaven, YDS 60/1, St Bee's School Register Book, 1585.

position in the Latin curriculum, but was also a means of understanding words that Cicero had used in particular ways characteristic of his style of writing. These books were meant for reference, and as a source of words and subject matter for composition; Erasmus' *De Copia* fulfilled a similar role.

Our main direct sources for the textbooks actually used in the grammar school classroom are often rules and statutes, timetables, and, where they are extant, lists of books given or bequeathed to a school, as at St Bee's and Shrewsbury, as well as in schoolmasters' wills.¹² Depending on their level of detail, timetables and statutes give us an idea of the books and authors covered in the curriculum, and how the master went about teaching them to his students. Timetables often describe, though not always in detail, not only what was learnt and when, but also how it was learnt, whether by construing, translating, making Latins, declamations, or other means; these teaching methods will be covered in the next section. In some cases the statutes and rules for grammar schools will describe the curriculum; occasionally they may allude to the methods of teaching, but are more commonly sources for which authors were read, and which specific texts. The list of authors to be read at Shrewsbury under Thomas Ashton's mastership is simply that, a list: Caesar, Sallust, Livy, Virgil, Horace, Ovid, Terence, Xenophon, Socrates. While we know the Greek New Testament was read in the school, and Clenard's Greek grammar was used to learn Greek, were the

¹² Cumbria RO, YDS 60/1, St Bee's School Register Book; J. B. Oldham, "Shrewsbury School Library: Its Earlier History and Organization", *Transactions of the Bibliographical Society, New Series*, xvi, 1 (June 1935): 53-82; for examples of schoolmaster listing books to be given to the school at which they taught, see The National Archives, PROB11/111/26, Will of John Baker, gentleman and second schoolmaster of the Free Grammar School of Shrewsbury, 1608; TNA, PROB 11/55/447, will of Thomas Rudd, master of Bury St Edmund's, 1573; TNA, PROB/11/162/164, will of John Woodhouse, master of Chichester, 1632, to give only a few examples.

two Greek authors on that list read in translation, or in the original language?¹³

How much of each author did they read? Which particular works, and in how much depth were these studied? A detailed study of a schoolboy's notebook would give a good insight into this; the notebook of William Badger from Winchester in the 1560s is used as an example of this in Chapter Four.

The statutes for newly founded, or re-founded, schools sometimes describe the intended curriculum for the school, in varying degrees of detail. The description of the curriculum of Archbishop Holgate's School (1547) is fairly sparse in terms of what was actually read; Holgate required the master at his school in York to understand Hebrew, Greek, and Latin. They are listed in that order in the statutes, implying that the end goal of such study was to read the Scriptures in their original languages, a humanist and Protestant endeavor; this will be discussed elsewhere, along with the place of Greek in the curriculum. The master was to teach and 'enforme' those students 'as shalbe most mete and apte for the same', according to his discretion.¹⁴ The schoolmaster, to be chosen by the archbishop according to the rules he set out in the statutes, was to be 'well seen', with a 'good knowledge and understandyng of the latyn tounge and Gram[mar]', and was to daily 'reade and teache gramer and other good Awters of the lattyn tounge' as well as authors translated into Latin (generally from the Greek) to whoever was 'able and apte'.¹⁵ The teaching of Greek and Hebrew is not described in any detail. The schoolmaster, and the usher who taught the lower

¹³ Oldham, "Shrewsbury School Library: Its Earlier History and Organization", 53-82.

¹⁴ Borthwick Institute for Archives, York, Bishopthorpe Papers, Bp. Sch. 53, 3, Archbishop Holgate's School foundation charter, 1546/7.

¹⁵ Borthwick, Bp. Sch. 53, 3, Holgate's School foundation charter.

forms, were to instruct the boys in ‘wrytyng of their latens’ (this is either simply general practice in writing Latin, or it could be ‘making Latins’, a traditional pedagogical method of turning English phrases into Latin) as well as in the writing out of the lessons themselves.¹⁶ It seems to have been expected that boys would enter Holgate’s school already knowing how to read: item twenty-eight of the statutes states that no schoolmaster or usher shall ever have to teach anyone who cannot read. At the schoolmaster’s discretion, however, one student might be chosen to, daily or weekly, teach reading to the younger boys.¹⁷ Despite this one allowance, Holgate’s school was purely a grammar school, without the provision for ‘petties’ to be taught there as at other schools, such as Guisborough, below. There is very little to work with here in terms of visualizing the curriculum at any of Holgate’s three schools, but we do learn that it was meant to be slightly more wide-ranging than only Latin.

The schoolmaster at Hawkshead, Lancaster, forty years later, was also required to be ‘well seen’, and to ‘have good understanding in the Greek, and Latyne tongues’. He was ‘to teache gramm(er) [it almost went without saying that it was Latin grammar], and the prynciples of the Greek tongue, wth other siyences necessarie to be taughte in a grammar schole’ to those students ‘most meete and apte’ for it.¹⁸ What these ‘other siyences’ were to be is not stated, although the school contained a greater emphasis on religious teaching than most of the other schools discussed here. The master and usher were to ‘teache all suche good Authours, wch doe conteyne honest precepts of vertue, and good lyterature for the

¹⁶ Borthwick, Bp. Sch. 53, 8, Holgate’s School foundation charter.

¹⁷ Borthwick, Bp. Sch. 53, 8, Holgate’s School foundation charter.

¹⁸ Borthwick, Bp. Sch. 25, 3, Hawkshead Grammar School foundation charter, 1588.

better education of youthe'.¹⁹ 'Good authors' is a phrase found very commonly in descriptions of curricula, possibly implying a certain degree of control by the schoolmaster, or perhaps alluding to the presence, no longer extant, of another, more detailed description of the curriculum. Reading classical literature for the moral lessons and 'honest precepts of vertue' contained therein is not unusual in itself, as it was a goal of grammar school education in general, the aim of the humanist method of education which, by the Elizabethan period, had established itself in English grammar schools. Sandys goes on to say, however, that once a week, at the least, the master was to 'instructe, and examine his schollers in the prynciples of trewe Religion, to thende they maie the better knowe and feare god'.²⁰ Sandys is certainly not unique in requiring this instruction in his school (the Guisborough master was similarly required to teach 'vertuous doctrines', for example, just as at Ruthin, Wakefield and Westminster the boys were taught the catechism on Sundays and holy days²¹), but is this a reflection of Sandys' own Protestant zeal, or of a wider trend in the teaching of religion? It is certainly the former, since we know how committed Sandys was to promoting religious instruction, but it also reflects a wider trend in grammar school teaching, since it is common in descriptions of a school's curriculum to see time set aside, often on a Saturday afternoon, for the boys to read the catechism and for the master to explain it in greater detail; we see this more frequently in Elizabethan-era

¹⁹ Borthwick, Bp. Sch. 25, 3, Hawkshead School foundation charter.

²⁰ Borthwick, Bp. Sch. 25, 10, Hawkshead School foundation charter.

²¹ Borthwick, Bp. Sch. 18, 13, foundation charter of Jesus Christ School and Hospital, Guisborough, 1561; "Ruthin School rules, 1574", in *Educational Documents 800-1816*, ed. D.W. Sylvester (London: Methuen & Co., 1970), 112; "Westminster School statutes, 1560", in Leach, ed., *Educational Charters and Documents*, 499.

foundations than in earlier establishments, perhaps reflecting the fact that by this point there was an official catechism from which to teach.²²

The Hawkshead statutes provide some further details regarding the pedagogical methods to be used in the school: before the school broke up for holidays at Christmas and Easter, the ‘cheifeste scholers’ were required to ‘make Oracons, Epistles, verses in Latin or Greeke for ther exercyse, that thereby the said scholmaster may see how the said schollers have p[ro]fyt[ed]’. The students were also required to ‘countynuallie use the Lattyne tongue, or the Greeke tongue wth in the schole, as they shalbe able’.²³ These details are evidence of the humanist influence in the curriculum, though they do not necessarily have any religious significance.

The statutes for Guisborough School, Yorkshire, are more informative still, providing an indication of the books used there and the ordering of the curriculum form by form. Here, the schoolmaster was to teach ‘gram[er] and suche authours and bokes as here after be rehersed’.²⁴ These authors, and in some cases their specific works are described in great depth later on in the statutes, for each of the four forms at the school. The second, third, and fourth forms are not unusual in their curriculum and method of teaching, examined in more detail below.

Beginning with Lily’s *Grammar*, as well as Terence, Aesop’s fables, Virgil, Cicero’s *Epistles*, and whoever else the schoolmaster thought ‘expedient’ and suitable, the master also gave the boys English phrases to make into Latin. The

²² See, for instance, the rules and statutes for Westminster (1560), Ruthin (1574), Wakefield (1591), and Hertford (1616), for direct mention of study of the catechism; the schools at Giggleswick (1553), Hawkshead (1588), and Guildford (1608), for example, mention religious instruction very generally, with no specification as to how this was to be imparted.

²³ Borthwick, Bp. Sch. 25, 10, Hawkshead School foundation charter.

²⁴ Borthwick, Bp. Sch. 18, 13, Guisborough School foundation charter.

fourth form read Sallust, Ovid, Cicero's *Offices*, Caesar's *Commentaries*, Erasmus' *De copia*, and, as with the third form, anything else deemed 'expedient', in addition to 'the art, and reules of versifiyng' if the master was skilled enough to teach these. The boys of the fourth form translated English into Latin, and back again into English, and wrote letters to one another, which the schoolmaster read and corrected.²⁵

The first form at the school, however, is slightly less usual in that it consisted of 'yong begynners', or 'petits': these were the children who came to school to learn to read. They learnt the 'caractars and figures of letters', to read, 'prononce' and 'sounde' English, from a boy of the third or fourth form, with the master himself devoting at least two hours a week to hearing them read their letters.²⁶ Not every grammar school included the teaching of English reading to 'petties' ('petits' here), or very young children, but Guisborough school did. This may have depended on what other schooling was available in the area, and whether there was a petty school the boys could go to first.

It is the material covered by the second through fourth forms that is particularly useful here. The titles and authors listed in the founder's statutes are fairly standard, found in other grammar school curricula and indicative of the practice in other schools at the time, but how were they approached? It is also not explained in much detail how the Latin language was practiced and made familiar to the boys – in other words, what methods were used to accomplish this. It is also not specified which of the texts by a particular author the students were actually

²⁵ Borthwick, Bp. Sch. 18, 13, Guisborough School foundation charter.

²⁶ Borthwick, Bp. Sch. 18, 13-14, Guisborough School foundation charter.

reading, though this vagueness is a common feature of descriptions of curricula in this period; one must assume this was left up to the schoolmaster, or that there were only certain works by a particular author from which to choose and that these were all well enough known at the time to require no further explanation: Cicero, for instance, implied the *De officiis* or the *Epistolae familiares*, while reading Virgil meant the *Aeneid*, *Eclogues*, and *Georgics*.

A curriculum description such as Guisborough's may serve as an example of how we might determine a sixteenth-century curriculum from a list of authors and titles in school statutes or lists of rules, and the potential challenges therein. Its gaps may suggest some freedom of the master to pick the texts studied (other 'litill books', for instance, is open to interpretation), or the level of control the founder wished to have on the curriculum; it may equally indicate how much the reader of such a list would already take for granted what would be read in the school, with little detail or prompting needed. There could, of course, have been another, more detailed, text that is no longer extant.

The founder of Guisborough school, Robert Pursglove, lists the 'verses of manners', or the *Carmen de moribus*, written by William Lily, along with the Precepts of Cato, both of which were meant to teach eloquence, and 'lessons of honestie, and godlynes', as well as give practice in pronunciation, and are found commonly prescribed for the lower forms of grammar schools. In listing the other, classical, texts to be used, Pursglove only lists the authors' names, and not the specific titles to be read. This is frequently seen in descriptions of curricula. Terence begins Pursglove's list: he was read for learning to speak Latin well, as he was often considered second only to Cicero in terms of the best author to imitate;

²⁷ Erasmus saw him as an example of good spoken Latin, and his plays were read aloud, for example at Ruthin, by the students for this reason. Aesop comes next; he was, like Cato, a text for the lower forms, meant more for moral edification and as an engaging way of teaching beginners' Latin, and it is his *Fables* which are the text in question here.

Virgil follows. His *Georgics*, *Bucolics*, and the *Aeneid* were all read in grammar schools of the period, largely for Virgil's exemplary writing style, but perhaps for their content also, for the themes of cultivation and instruction found in the *Georgics*, so appropriate to a school. Simply listing 'Virgil' in a list of books to be studied tended to imply that all three of his works would be read. Virgil was also considered the gateway to the upper forms of school, the dividing line between knowing the rudiments of grammar and not.²⁸ Cicero is, not surprisingly, listed here, and in his case we know that it was his *Epistles* which Pursglove had in mind. Sallust is listed for the fourth and highest form, but with no indication of what text, specifically; Ovid follows, and with him there were two most likely options, *De tristibus* and *Metamorphoses*. Caesar's *Commentaries* was also read, but was it for style or content? The statutes further prescribe Erasmus' *De copia*, for improving the style of written Latin, as a source for 'copy', or the art of varying the way in which an idea might be expressed, popular since the early sixteenth century when it was first published. Besides these authors, the master was to use anything else 'expedient' in his teaching. This vague, open-ended way of describing the curriculum is a common one.

²⁷ Ascham, *The Scholemaster*, 3.

²⁸ Andrew Wallace, *Virgil's Schoolboys: The Poetics of Pedagogy in Renaissance England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 40, 2.

Sometimes we can build up a picture despite this lack of detail: for letter-writing, for instance, a boy might use Cicero's *Epistles*, along with Erasmus' *De conscribendis epistolis*. The presence of the *Epistles* at Guisborough indicates that the students were practising letter-writing, a very practical skill. This would be done using the manuals of Cicero, Erasmus, or Vives to provide the model, and would be written to other students, or to the master; the boy might adopt the voice of a character in ancient literature and devise his subject matter from that – anything to practise writing a good Latin letter for any type of situation.²⁹ This brings us to the methods of teaching and practising Latin, which were a very practical introduction to the real ways in which writing and speaking well would be used outside the classroom.

Methods of Teaching and Practising Latin

Teaching methods were largely up to the schoolmaster, passed down through experience, one master to the next, and did not change radically over this period: they included translation exercises, whether these were 'making Latins', or Ascham's double-translation; writing themes and verses, memorizing grammatical rules in writing or orally, speaking Latin in the classroom, or engaging in classroom disputations and orations. There was an increasing desire to imitate the ancient authors, and to hold the classical texts as the highest standard of Latin composition, but the techniques themselves for teaching and learning Latin did not change dramatically during the sixteenth century. They

²⁹ Peltonen, *Rhetoric, Politics, and Popularity in Pre-Revolutionary England*, 44-47.

remained very similar across this period, the main changes being the use of printed, as opposed to manuscript, texts from which to teach, which more readily provided the students with the texts with which they would work, and the shift towards humanist standards of ‘good’ Latin; the ways of practising Latin in an early Tudor school largely look very similar to those used a century later. In this regard one might agree with Rosemary O’Day’s argument that ‘Renaissance humanist theory’ affected different schools to different degrees, with some embracing it fully, and others adopting only ‘such of the new attitude to education as was appropriate to’ the school founders’ original intentions (or the resources of the school and its master), while maintaining older teaching methods alongside these newer ideas; this will become more apparent in Chapter Six, however, when one considers the spread of Greek instruction in the grammar schools.³⁰ Teaching methods are somewhat more difficult to determine than which texts were used to teach Latin, but we can still get a sense of what these techniques were.

For some of the better-documented schools, such as Eton and Winchester, fairly detailed timetables survive, showing not only what type of material was covered at different times in the week for each form, but also indicating which kinds of teaching methods were used to teach this material. At Eton in 1530, the first four forms made ‘latynes’, of which more later; the fifth, sixth, and seventh forms were more varied in their method of practising: ‘wrytyng of a theme’, ‘versifyeng rulys drawne owte of despauterius other modus conscribendus epistolas’, and ‘mak[ing] verses’ were done every week by the older boys. In other words, Latin was practised by means of composition, writing verses, and

³⁰ O’Day, *Education and Society 1500-1900*, 42, 79.

letter-writing. Speaking Latin is mentioned once, in the beginning, as the boys were to be monitored for speaking only Latin in the classroom.³¹ The timetable (Appendix 1) which can be drawn up based on the description of the curriculum for the Free Grammar School of Hertford in 1616 is in many ways similar to the earlier one for Eton, in that much of the week was given over to translation, from English into Latin and from Latin into Greek, or to writing themes and verses, although there is more mention here of the schoolmaster lecturing the boys on grammatical rules, which were to be memorized and repeated the next day.³²

School rules and statutes tend to provide more information with regard to the authors which were read, rather than how they were approached, but sometimes a more detailed description will survive, one which can allow us to piece together what the week's schedule would have looked like. For example, at Ruthin School in 1574, the lowest class recited a part of speech or conjugated a verb to the usher; this was, says the founder, 'the manner used at most schools'. All classes recited the lessons learned the day before, and the younger boys translated sentences, set by the master or usher, from English into Latin - this is essentially the practice of 'making Latins', a technique much-used early in the sixteenth century and closely associated with *vulgaria*. The upper classes wrote themes, in prose, once every week, as well as made verses, on a set theme. The younger boys were set translations from English into Latin. When not actively employed in translating or writing, the boys listened as the master read to them from Cicero's *Orations*, Salust, Terence, Aesop, and Corderius' dialogues two

³¹ "Eton and Winchester Timetables, 1530", in Leach, ed., *Educational Charter and Documents*, 448-451.

³² British Library Additional Manuscript 33578, Papers Relating to the Free Grammar School at Hertford, 1616-71.

days a week; Virgil, Ovid, Homer, Erasmus, and Seneca were read on the alternate days. While the master read, the boys were meant to note down ‘phrases or forms of speech, Proverbs, Adages, Descriptions of Time, Place, Persons, Apothegms, and such like’; while it was not specified that the boys were keeping commonplace books, it would make sense that that was what they were doing, as the practice of noting down such phrases, arranged by subject, was a standard humanist method of arranging information for use later on, as well as to aid in the memorization of such information.³³ Essentially, the boys were given a thorough grounding in the rules of Latin grammar, and then heard the best Latin composition in use from the master’s reading, and were trained to imitate this style themselves through practice in theme-writing and versifying. This progression from rules to actual examples is seen in the way spoken Latin was practised also: the usher listened to his students dispute one day a week, but on the topic of grammar rules, while the master listened to his students read out an act of Terence or Plautus, instructing them in both speech and gesture. The methods at Ruthin had changed just slightly from those at Eton forty years before, placing more emphasis on spoken Latin and using a wider range of texts with which to practice written Latin, the result of the humanist method of teaching Latin taking hold in schools, as the nature of the imitation altered to incorporate more classical examples of Latin use, and a more oratorical, rhetorical, even literary, use of Latin took hold, meant to persuade an audience.³⁴

³³ Ann Blair, “Humanist Methods in Natural Philosophy: The Commonplace Book”, *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 53, 4 (Oct-Dec 1992): 544.

³⁴ “Ruthin School rules, 1574”, in Sylvester, ed., *Educational Documents*, 110-116.

The rhetoric taught in the schools came in different types, the two most common being judicial and familiar, judicial being used to make a persuasive case either in one's defence or as an accusation, familiar being used to convey news, usually in a letter. Markku Peltonen argues that familiar rhetoric was the type most commonly used by schoolboys when they wrote letters to practise their Latin, while Quentin Skinner emphasizes the place of judicial rhetoric ('forensic', to use his term), arguing that this is the kind of rhetoric drawn upon in Shakespeare's plays, a reflection of the rhetorical instruction Shakespeare had received in school. Schoolboys appear to have practised both varieties of rhetoric, the familiar, giving-of-news, type useful for letter-writing, and the judicial type useful for declamations and disputations.³⁵

Imitation was an essential method of practising one's written Latin. The method of the schoolmaster providing the boys with sentences to translate, or to illustrate a particular grammatical rule, had long been followed in schools as a teaching method, but what was being translated, and the source and content of the practice sentences (or dialogues, or longer passages) underwent a noticeable change during the 1530s and 40s, around the time Lily's *Grammar* was published. Early in the century, the traditional method of using *vulgaria*, or sentences in English for translation into Latin, was the predominant one. The content of these *vulgaria* is discussed in Chapter Four, but their origins are worth describing here. William Horman's well-known collection of *vulgaria* sentences, published in 1519, was compiled after his retirement from schoolteaching, and had simply been made up on the spot, a fact his students knew, and Horman describes them as

³⁵ Peltonen, *Rhetoric, Politics, and Popularity*, 18, 47; Skinner, *Forensic Shakespeare*, 1-2.

being mostly ‘such as occurred in casual conversation, and had no inner coherence’; he may have borrowed a word or two from an author but proceeded to invent the rest of the sentence himself. Robert Whittinton was somewhat more systematic in his methods, grouping his *vulgaria* under headings such as school, the law courts, schoolboy phrases, and ‘authoryte’ – these last were examples taken from ancient authors but the rest he made up himself, as Horman had done.³⁶

Roger Ascham did not approve of this highly improvised method of devising practice material. The humanist method of teaching Latin emphasized imitating the style of the most eloquent authors, which might come at the expense of learning the rules of grammar– this concern was expressed by John Skelton in his poem *Speke Parrot*: children are set to study Plautus and Quintilian, but can barely understand Cato and basic verb conjugations, ‘settyinge theyr myndys so moche of eloquens, That of theyr scole maters lost is the whole sentens’.³⁷ While Ascham was not quite so extreme in this regard, he did insist that the student absorb the rules of grammar first, and that ‘dailie translatinge’ and ‘diligent parsinge’ be mastered and perfected before the student moved on to speaking Latin. Ascham firmly believed that the best way to learn Latin well was to have something of good quality to imitate. Children who were brought up speaking Latin early on, Ascham believed, were prone to speak it badly, and learn it incorrectly; being brought up to speak Latin would only be of use if one lived in a

³⁶ Baldwin, *Shakspeare’s Small Latine*, II, 696-7.

³⁷ John Skelton, “Speke Parrot”, in *John Skelton: Poems*, ed. Robert S. Kinsman (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), lines 169-182.

household where it was spoken well.³⁸ It was fine to make Latins to illustrate the rules of grammar, but whose example should you use? Something invented by the master (as Horman and Whittinton did), or the Latin of Cicero? Ascham would not have a student write or speak Latin until he could do so like Cicero, or at the very least like Terence.³⁹ While pedagogical methods remained quite similar, the approach to, and aim of, learning Latin changed, and imitation gradually won out over precept. This is partly due to the fact that humanist teaching methods and attitudes towards learning grammar gradually replaced and altered the earlier methods, but one might also suggest that the method of imitation was aided in its popularity by the increased use of printed schoolbooks as opposed to those in manuscript, which provided more standardized models to imitate and increased the students' access to copies of classical texts from which to imitate an author's style. The *Vulgaria* of Horman and Whittinton were out of print by the 1560s, and came to be used only in the early stages of the curriculum, if at all. At St Paul's the Bible itself was apparently a source of 'Latins': the psalms, proverbs, and Ecclesiasticus from the Bishop's Bible were mined for suitable 'vulgars' to make into 'Latins'.⁴⁰

By the end of the sixteenth century, Lily and some good Roman authors were considered to be all one needed to learn good Latin, and that was accordingly what was being printed. The pattern to be seen here is that schoolmasters gradually ceased inventing material for their students to translate, and the books of *vulgaria* so common early in the century stopped being printed;

³⁸ Ascham, *The Scholemaster*, 3.

³⁹ Baldwin, *Shakspeare's Small Latine*, II, 697-9.

⁴⁰ Baldwin, *Shakspeare's Small Latine*, II, 707.

the concept of using simple English sentences to translate was still present in the curriculum, but they were more classically inspired. It was often schoolmasters in this period who were responsible for compiling dictionaries, but these works were very classical in terms of the words they included.

Ascham's favoured method of instruction was that of double translation, borrowed from the Continental humanist, and Ciceronian, Johannes Sturm. The master took a passage of Latin (ideally from Cicero), translated it into English, and gave it to the student. The student translated this into Latin, and then compared his translation with the original passage. The master was meant to point out where the student did well, and where they went wrong, all in a kind and encouraging manner.⁴¹ This was all very fine if the master had only one or two students (so, for Ascham, as a tutor, it was ideal), but this method was difficult to use in a grammar school classroom of many boys, all of different levels of ability; the master would have neither the time nor the patience to do this. Simpler translation exercises were more realistic for a grammar school, most commonly from English into Latin.

Actual school exercises from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries are quite rarely extant, but textbooks may survive, which, if they are annotated by their owners, can be very useful in understanding how the boys took in the Latin they learned, and how they made sense of it; from this, we can have some idea of what they were meant to use their Latin for and even how it may have been presented to them in the classroom. A copy of Lily's *Short Introduction of Grammar* from 1613 in the library of the University of Leeds contains heavy

⁴¹ Baldwin, *Shakespeare's Small Latine*, II, 702.

annotation. In a fine, neat, early seventeenth-century hand, an early owner of the book has written rather extensively, in Latin, in the margins and fly-leaves of the book. His notes largely relate to points of grammar, mainly how to make use of particular grammatical points, with reference to how other authors, such as Cicero, Livy, Terence, Horace, and Pliny, used them. There are a few lines translated from unnamed sources, to illustrate a complex grammatical rule in practice, with short summaries of which rule they illustrate. These notes also go on to explain the divisions of an oration or declamation, and the potential purposes to which one's oratorical skill may be put, in addition to quotations from Cicero, Terence, Pliny, Ovid, and Martial.

The section on 'Prosodia', on syllables and accents and good pronunciation, is more heavily annotated. This student has moved on from learning the parts of speech, to learning the parts of *a* speech. He has written a list of the headings, or sections, of an oration, the division of a theme and of an argument, as well as 'loci communi', tropes, and figures of speech. His notes also discuss solecisms and barbarisms, comparing 'barbarous' words with well-spoken words – differences largely in clear versus unclear pronunciation. This seems to be the main concern of the student, that of pronunciation and the good delivery of an oration. The notes speak of how to make an affecting, clear, argument in one's speech. This is a serious student who is taking the Latin skills he has learned and actively trying to understand what he should be doing with those skills. He appears to have mastered the basic elements of Latin grammar and moved on to the study of rhetoric. It is interesting to note that while this student was using the book in the early seventeenth century, the book itself, even if printed in the

seventeenth century, is essentially still the same text as was first published in the 1540s, at least in terms of the way the grammar is explained.

The book has been used by more than one person; the one whose notes are described in detail here has made the most extensive annotations to the book. But there are other names written in various hands on the fly-leaves of the text, and in what resembles an older hand the text is described as 'Edw. Matthews' book', this inscription accompanying several quotes, mostly from Cicero, but with some Pliny, Ovid, Horace, and Cato, as well as a note regarding the circumference of the earth, broken down into smaller and smaller measurements: if the earth's circumference is 50750 leagues, 'every league [is] 2 miles, every mile 8 stages, every stage 125 pases, every pase, 5 foote, every foot 4 palmes, every palme 4 inches, every inch 3 barley cornes'. This set of measurements bears some similarity to the contents of Leonard Digges' *Prognostication* (1576), and the lengths given there about the distances between the earth and the moon and the planets, but it could also reflect the calculations made in the second century BC by the Greek mathematician and astronomer Eratosthenes; the measurements written in this copy of Lily are equivalent to Eratosthenes' measurements of the Earth's circumference. This passage is unrelated to the contents of the book, and is in a different hand to the notes on rhetoric found on the other pages, but the fact that it has been recorded on the fly-leaf of the book could reflect the fact that the book's owner was familiar with the ideas of either Digges or Eratosthenes, and

that the measurements of the earth were something to note down as one would do in a commonplace book.⁴²

The nature of these annotations, then, leads us on to another way in which schoolboys practised their Latin and became familiar with its uses, and an important purpose for which it was learned. Speaking Latin was a method of teaching found in virtually all schools in this period. In the field of speaking well, with wisdom and eloquence as a good orator, we see the humanist use of classical ideals firmly taking root in the grammar school curriculum. School rules commonly state that the boys above a certain form must speak Latin at all times while in school, or even outside the classroom, depending on the school. It had been the case since the middle ages that the boys spoke Latin as part of their training in the language, and it was the language of instruction in the upper forms; it was not some novel humanist innovation in the grammar schools, and nor was the idea of the classroom disputation a new one, as this was used in medieval education also. Creating a perfect orator increasingly became a more conscious goal, however.

Having mastered their ‘accidence’, or basic rules of grammar, and vocabulary, and having been forced already to speak Latin in class, the older boys would proceed to formal disputations, declamations, and orations – practice in rhetoric, or speaking eloquently and persuasively. These might be done purely within the classroom, before the master, as at Ruthin, or before the boys of another school as a competition. The latter practice is found at a number of

⁴²Brotherton Library, Leeds, Strong Room Engl. 8vo 1613 LIL, Lily’s *Short Introduction to Grammar*, 1613 and Camden’s *Institutio graecae grammatices compendaria*, 1617; Leonard Digges, *A Prognostication Everlastinge of Right Good Effecte Fruitfully Augmented by the Auctor, Contayning Plaine, Briefe, Pleasaunt, Chosen Rules to Iudge the Weather*, (Thomas Marsh, 1576), EEBO.

London schools, such as St Anthony's and the Merchant Taylors' school. John Colet expressly forbade public disputations by his scholars at St Paul's, condemning them as 'but foolish babbling, and losse of time'.⁴³ It is not clear from his section on 'What Shall be Taught' whether Colet allowed disputations within the classroom, and whether it was just the public element to which he objected. Grammar school boys were given many opportunities to practise their spoken Latin, whether in the classroom or out. Performing plays was another way of learning how to speak Latin well; at Ruthin these were read just one act at a time, purely for instructional purposes it seems, though at some schools, such as Shrewsbury, plays were actually performed. The plays at Shrewsbury, however, were not classical; they were written by the headmaster Thomas Ashton, and are discussed further in Chapter Four. A memorandum from the governors of Blackburn School, Lancashire, in 1591 declares that 'no Englisshe enterludes or playes shalbe from henceforth playde or used'.⁴⁴ Did this apply only to English plays, or to Latin plays as well? It is possible that Latin plays were read as part of the curriculum, and that the English interludes were on contentious subjects, political or religious, hence a desire to see them removed from the schoolroom.

Other ways to practise speaking Latin might include welcoming important visitors to the school, such as the governors, or to the town, where schoolboys might give a speech to the Queen when she visited on progress. All these opportunities for speaking aloud in Latin were certainly another way in which to

⁴³ "St Paul's School statutes, 1512", in Nicholas Carlisle, *A Concise Description of the Endowed Grammar Schools of England and Wales*, (2 vols., London: Baldwin, Craddock, and Joy, 1818, reprinted Richmond, 1972), II, 75.

⁴⁴ Lancashire Record Office, Preston, DDBK 3/9, Memoranda of Money, Deeds, and Orders Concerning Payments by Scholars of Blackburn School, 1591.

learn the language; speaking it in class at all times was so that the boys learnt it more quickly and effectively. But they were also simply ways to practise good public speaking: even if a boy only went on to speak English for the rest of his life, he would have been trained, albeit through the medium of Latin, to speak well. This was understood at the time to be one of the main purposes of a grammar school, a key part of creating ‘active citizens’, for the good of society and its government.⁴⁵ The same may be said of writing: one would leave school with a thorough grounding in Latin composition, but would also be prepared to write a speech, or a letter, or an argument of any kind, in English or in Latin, having been taught the ways to make an effective and persuasive argument in school, skills the owner of the Lily’s *Grammar* in Leeds was clearly trying to internalize.

Reconciling Classical and Christian Literature

Were the classical authors read more for their style or their content? In the case of Latin authors, it was predominantly about style, about rhetorical and oratorical techniques, though the content was also important, as an immoral text could not be used to teach with, no matter how perfect the author’s style of writing. Roman historians were read for their style, certainly, but in this case the content was important, since ancient history was used to teach lessons useful for future politicians and diplomats. Erasmus, and his teacher Rudolph Agricola, saw the study of the Bible, ‘sacred letters’, as the eventual goal of reading ancient

⁴⁵ Peltonen, *Rhetoric, Politics, and Popularity*, 31.

literature, and preaching as the highest form of oratory – for them, classical knowledge was meant to be used in the service of understanding the Christian faith and Scriptures.⁴⁶ Classical texts lent themselves well to being interpreted and challenged, and presented to the students in different ways to work around any problematic material, in a way that Scripture did not.⁴⁷ This division between studying classical authors and Christian ones will be discussed in Chapter Six, as the question of style or content is extremely important in the discussion of Greek studies. Reading a text in its original Greek, as opposed to a Latin translation, indicates a concern with correctly understanding the content, while learning Greek to understand how the most eloquent Latin authors acquired their skills in rhetoric indicates a concern with style.

This tension, or otherwise, between classical and Christian Latin was partially to do with the content of the Latin works, but also with the style of the writing. Imitation, discussed above, was generally of Cicero, with a specific dictionary in circulation, the *Nizolius* mentioned earlier, which contained words used in Cicero's works and examples of the ways in which he had used them; a copy of this book is mentioned by name among the books kept at St Bee's School at the end of the sixteenth century. On the continent, this Ciceronianism was taken to the extreme with humanists such as Etienne Dolet using only words which Cicero himself had used, which becomes complicated when one must describe religious terms which had not been in use in Cicero's time, or which had somewhat different meanings in the pagan and Christian contexts; words such as

⁴⁶ Mack, *Renaissance Argument: Valla and Agricola in the Traditions of Rhetoric and Dialectic*, 303, 312.

⁴⁷ John Morgan, *Godly Learning: Puritan Attitudes Towards Reason, Learning, and Education, 1560-1640* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 74.

‘anima’ and ‘caelus’ do appear in the Nizolius, and do refer to the soul and to heaven respectively, but in a somewhat different sense from the Christian idea of heaven as opposed to hell, and from the Christian concept of the soul and its fate after death.⁴⁸ Dolet referred in his poems to the pagan, classical, gods, rather than God, and never to Christ.⁴⁹ Using Latin for religious purposes would also become more difficult if Ciceronian Latin could not accurately describe the features of Christianity, which it could not always do. This form of imitation was not practiced to quite the same extent in England, where Latin writers were ‘moderate’, not slavish, Ciceronians.⁵⁰ Gabriel Harvey argued in his *Ciceronianus* (1577) that one cannot ignore other authors: how do you know Cicero is the best of the Latin writers if he is never compared to any others? Early humanists like Erasmus, Vives, and Thomas More were against the blind copying of Cicero’s style, though Roger Ascham would have his students ideally learn Latin as Cicero did, using the books he would have used.⁵¹ There was a difference between ‘copied imitation’ and ‘adaptive imitation’, between rigidly imitating exactly the way Cicero wrote, and more flexibly using what was relevant from Cicero’s work to one’s own composition. This ‘Ciceronianism’ did not completely change the way in which Latin was taught, but it did, in the latter half of the sixteenth century, increase the emphasis placed on using actual classical texts in the study

⁴⁸ Mario Nizzoli, *Nizolius sive thesaurus ciceronianus* (Basel: Johann Herwagen, 1576), 101, 192.

⁴⁹ Lucien Febvre, *The Problem of Unbelief in the Sixteenth Century: The Religion of Rabelais*, trans. by Beatrice Gottlieb (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982), 57.

⁵⁰ J. W. Binns, *Intellectual Culture in Elizabethan and Jacobean England: The Latin Writings of the Age* (Leeds: Francis Cairns, 1990), 289.

⁵¹ Binns, *Intellectual Culture in Elizabethan and Jacobean England*, 271, 279.

of rhetoric, and led to the increased specification in statutes and curricula of specific authors.⁵²

What Did A Grammar School NOT Teach?

Having studied the Latin language so thoroughly and so rigorously for several years, what were the boys then meant to do with that knowledge of Latin, and what were they expected to have gained from their study? A sense of discipline and focus, from the intense study of complex rules of grammar and lists of vocabulary, seems one apparent benefit; a degree of moral training was also expected, yet how applicable to sixteenth- and seventeenth-century English society and politics were some of these lessons which came from a pre-Christian, Greco-Roman context? It is also worth bearing in mind that these authors, Cicero, Terence, Ovid, Virgil, and the rest, were not writing for children – their works, studied by schoolboys no older than their mid-teens, had been written for an adult audience. The boys practised writing letters, verses, prose compositions, and orations, all pedagogical methods which reflected what they might eventually do with their Latin education. The benefits of the teaching methods themselves are more obvious: writing a letter was a useful skill, for instance, and composing orations was good practice for writing sermons or speeches one day. Yet significantly it was *in Latin*, through imitating the style of *Latin* authors, that schoolboys practised writing and speaking. Speaking well in general, practiced in orations and disputations, would prepare a grammar school boy, and eventual

⁵² Baldwin, *Shakspeare's Small Latine*, II, 181.

university graduate, to one day be a member of Parliament, a clergyman, a lawyer, a member of local government – in a public role like these, one's oratorical skills were put to good use; they would be similarly exercised in writing, letters being the most obvious instance, or sermons in the case of future clergymen, while for the authors of verses and epigrams, the grammar school had provided practice in those forms of written expression also.

Of the main elements involved in grammar school education, religious instruction was visibly affected by the Reformation, the licensing of schoolmasters was directly linked to it also, and the teaching of Greek was influenced partially by religious reform and partially by humanist ideals. But the type of Latin used in the schools and the reasons for teaching it are more closely related to humanist standards of Latin education. England's religious policy after the 1540s may be said to provide a framework within which standardization might take place (such as the use of a uniform grammar textbook), but a move towards specifying certain texts, the best authors to imitate and learn from, is more humanist than Protestant in nature. But for an education which was intended to equip a boy for a career in English society, in the English church or English law, for instance, the instruction provided in the grammar schools contained very little English. The religious education given there, in the form of catechizing and daily prayers, was the only English-language component of the curriculum. The curriculum of the sixteenth- and early seventeenth century grammar school did not include instruction in modern languages, English history, or mathematics, subjects which would be eminently useful for a number of occupations at that time. Someone who would eventually exercise authority in England would have

received very little introduction to English government or history; at least, this knowledge would not have come from a grammar school. A grammar school would teach a boy all about Roman or Greek government and history, from which he was meant to derive lessons applicable to his country's present circumstances. Individual study and reading, or instruction by someone knowledgeable in the subject, would have to provide this instruction in contemporary English politics and in the history of one's own country.

In addition to this, we see in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries a significant number of merchants, architects, surveyors, and others who demonstrated their skills in numeracy, yet subjects such as arithmetic, casting accounts, or geometry are rarely, if ever, mentioned within the curriculum of the grammar schools, which were among the primary sites of formal academic instruction during this period. Often we are left wondering whether other subjects might in fact have been taught, because of the phrase 'other good learning' which appears in many school statutes and curriculum descriptions. What were the grammar schools not teaching, and why? Examining what was excluded from the curriculum, and where such subjects were taught instead, can give us a greater understanding of the role of the grammar schools and what skills they were intended to impart.

For example, let us examine a subject like arithmetic – using numbers in one's day to day life, something to which the grammar schools seem not to have given any time in the curriculum; occasionally 'casting accounts' is mentioned in the context of elementary education, but it is very rare to find any form of mathematical instruction in the grammar school curriculum. The mental habits

required to master numerical skills were considered very different to those involved in learning a language; they were considered anti-social, the opposite of rhetorical skills which had an overtly social purpose, and had less potential for social disruption than did rhetoric.⁵³ It was more of a mechanical, and less of an academic, skill, and as such was considered to be fit only for certain occupations and therefore for people below a certain social standing. Was mathematical knowledge considered somehow inferior to liberal, humanist, knowledge? Not according to Keith Thomas, who describes numbers as being a new form of ‘intellectual inquiry’ in this period, whether for their own sake, or as the skills needed for architecture, navigation, or surveying, for instance.⁵⁴ These are skills which a boy who had been to a grammar school would have to know later in life, if he wanted to be responsible for his finances, for a start, but his formal education did not provide this knowledge.

Who would have needed these numerical skills? Anyone involved in administration, such as bailiffs, stewards, auditors; someone in the military, or involved in navigation (and by extension overseas trade), or in building, architecture, surveying, or bookbinding; workmen, merchants, instrument-makers: these people all needed some degree of numerical literacy.⁵⁵ Were these the same people who were attending the grammar schools? In many cases yes, there is an overlap, yet, as we will see in more detail later, they were not learning the skills of their trade in grammar schools. Most grammar school boys joined the clergy, or

⁵³ Keith Thomas, “Numeracy in Early Modern England”, *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, fifth series, 37 (1987): 109, 111; Peltonen, *Rhetoric, Politics, and Popularity*, 241.

⁵⁴ Thomas, “Numeracy in Early Modern England”, 103.

⁵⁵ Thomas, “Numeracy in Early Modern England”, 108. Adam Fox notes, however, that early modern shopkeepers might still keep notched sticks. *Oral and Literate Culture in England 1500-1700* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 21.

occasionally studied law or medicine. These are far removed from the so-called ‘mechanical arts’ which required an understanding of mathematics or arithmetic, and did not involve keeping accounts. Yet if a school had a library, it might contain books on subjects which never appear in descriptions of the curriculum, such as theology, law, medicine, astronomy, *mathematics*, or *arithmetic*; the library at Shrewsbury, for example, contained this wide range of subjects. If schoolmasters left books to their school in their will, those books might well be on numerical topics, such as the six books on arithmetic left by John Baker, second master at Shrewsbury, to that school in 1608; these were specifically destined for the library, for the use of the schoolmaster and his scholars.⁵⁶

If it was not found in most grammar school curricula, then did elementary education provide instruction in numeracy, a basic instruction that was not continued in the grammar schools? It was not a subject a boy would necessarily need in order to be successful in a grammar school, so it could be introduced at the elementary, or ‘petty’ level, and not continued beyond that. In some cases, it was an elementary subject; alongside reading and writing, some ‘petty schools’ did teach ‘cyphering’ and ‘casting accounts’. In 1597, for instance, one William Hurst was licensed to teach, in the parish of Botsham (Bottisham, Cambridgeshire), ‘to write and reade and caste accompts’.⁵⁷ Petty school instruction at Wellingborough, Northamptonshire in 1599 consisted of reading, writing, and casting accounts.⁵⁸ It is rarely mentioned in the lower forms of the

⁵⁶ TNA, PROB11/111/26, Will of John Baker, gentleman and second schoolmaster of the Free Grammar School of Shrewsbury, 1608.

⁵⁷ Cambridge University Library, LIC.A.I (4) I, teaching licence for William Hurst, 1597.

⁵⁸ Baldwin, *Shakspeare's Petty School*, 78.

grammar schools where the youngest boys might be instructed in reading in English; Guisborough school had an older student do most of the work in teaching the ‘petits’ their ‘characters and figures of letters’, but numbers are not explicitly mentioned; the *ABC with the Catechism* contained a list of the numbers up to 300, in Roman and Arabic numerals and in words, so that they could be recognized and counted, but nothing beyond this.⁵⁹ The usher at Nuneaton was in charge of teaching ‘younge schollers to write, read and cast accompt’, but it is not common to see this arrangement prevail.⁶⁰ Elementary education was not always provided in a school; basic reading and writing skills, in English, could be taught at home; Adam Fox reminds us that the spread of Protestant ideas re-emphasised the educational role of women in the home, in teaching their children to read, and possibly this included a basic instruction in numeracy.⁶¹

Another possibility for the teaching of arithmetic, which would explain why it so infrequently appears in contemporary descriptions of the curriculum, was that it was taught alongside writing at the grammar schools, as an ‘extra’ subject. Contemporary descriptions of the teaching of writing, however, rarely mention anything about numbers beyond being able to write them correctly. Writing was a much more difficult skill to teach than reading, ‘a vocational skill identified with male writing-masters who also taught arithmetic and often other basic business or trade skills’; writing and arithmetic were less commonly expected skills of children entering grammar school, unlike reading, which was

⁵⁹ Anon., *The ABC with the Catechisme: That is to Say, an Instruction to be Taught and Learned of Every Child, Before He be Brought to be Confirmed by the Bishop* (Company of Stationers, 1633), unpaginated, EEBO.

⁶⁰ Borthwick, Bp. Sch. 18, 13-14, Guisborough School foundation charter; Warwickshire Record Office, Warwick, H1/36, Copy of the Orders regulating the school at Nuneaton, c. 1553.

⁶¹ Fox, *Oral and Literate Culture*, 17.

expected.⁶² Of the four forms of boys at Guisborough School, forms two through four practised their writing every Friday afternoon, until they could write their lessons ‘handsomlie’, but numerical instruction does not seem to have been included in this.⁶³ Numerical instruction is described by Keith Thomas as being rare in the grammar schools before about 1660 unless it was an extra subject, taught on half days and holidays, or sometimes for an extra fee, which is frequently when we see writing being taught in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, or as being combined with writing for those who were not intended for the clergy but still wanted to find a living in the ‘mechanical arts’, as at Rotherham in 1483.⁶⁴ Do we see here a Latin ‘academic’ direction and a more vocational, or, to use the contemporary term, ‘mechanical’, one? At Aldenham Grammar School in Hertfordshire in 1600, founded for the children of the poor, arithmetic was a subject saved for Saturday afternoon, and then only taught by the usher: every Saturday afternoon for one hour, the schoolmaster taught the Latin catechism and the New Testament to the older boys, while the usher taught writing and arithmetic, referred to as ‘supputare’, to the younger ones. In 1572 St Olave’s school in Surrey taught children whose parents were ‘desirus to have them taught the principells of Christen Religion, and to wright, reade and cast accomptes, and so put them forth to prentice’.⁶⁵ In the case of St Olave’s, the children were being prepared for more ‘mechanical’ careers, although this

⁶² Jonathan Barry, “Literacy and Literature in Popular Culture: Reading and Writing in Historical Perspective” in *Popular Culture in England, c. 1500-1850*, ed. Tim Harris (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1995), 76.

⁶³ Borthwick, Bp. Sch. 18, 14, Guisborough School foundation charter.

⁶⁴ Thomas, “Numeracy in Early Modern England”, 109; Orme, *Medieval Schools*, 72.

⁶⁵ Baldwin, *Shakspeare’s Petty School*, 78.

knowledge of reading and writing and numbers could also prepare them to enter a grammar school and proceed along a more academic path. If numeracy appears at all in the context of a grammar school, it is usually as an alternative to the Latin curriculum, for those who are not fit for the academic route: for instance, Rolleston Grammar School, founded in 1520, required that if a student was not capable of learning (read: learning Latin grammar), he was at least to be taught reading in English, writing, and casting accounts, ‘lest they should seem to have come to this our school for nothing’.⁶⁶

In practice, numerical literacy seems to have been acquired later in life, well after school-age, and often on one’s own initiative. This is the pattern which emerges when we examine the training of architects, merchants, or instrument-makers: while they may have attended grammar school, they afterwards served an apprenticeship in their particular occupation; if they attended university, they learnt the skills of their trade from someone else.⁶⁷ The pattern that seems to emerge here is that a training in subjects like mathematics or accounting ran parallel to the education provided in the grammar schools and universities, rather than being a part of it. As such, it would have to be sought elsewhere. Italy had abacus schools for teaching arithmetic and accounting, while in England, there were similar schools in which one could learn practical business skills; these were fee-paying, and generally aimed at students slightly older than the boys in the

⁶⁶ Herbert C. Schulz, “The Teaching of Handwriting in Tudor and Stuart Times”, *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 6, 4 (August 1943): 393-4.

⁶⁷ This is based on a search of the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography for architects, navigators, merchants, instrument-makers, booksellers, mathematicians, and surveyors. Of course, such a search has its limitations, including as it does only those individuals who were noteworthy enough to be included in the Dictionary, as well as the fact that it is sometimes incomplete in terms of the individuals’ early lives, but it is a useful starting-point nonetheless. All entries consulted are listed in the bibliography.

grammar schools.⁶⁸ At the universities, where mathematical subjects were included in the curriculum, they were not taught in great depth.⁶⁹ Instruction was available in writing and accountancy, and had been since the later middle ages, from private teachers.⁷⁰ We know of individuals who taught these subjects, such as Hugh Oldcastle (d.1543), who taught arithmetic and book-keeping in London, and wrote one of the earliest English works on double-entry book-keeping, *A Briefe Introduction and Maner How to Keepe Bookes of Accompts*, which was later revised and published in 1588 by John Mellis (d.1593), another teacher of arithmetic and writing in St Olave's parish, Southwark.⁷¹ Other professional accountants and teachers of book-keeping and accounting include James Peele and John Weddington; both operated in London, the latter working for a merchant audience, translating continental texts on arithmetic for merchants. Little is known of the early education of any of these men, however, and whether or not they were educated at a grammar school.⁷² Some later mathematical practitioners learned their skills either while at university, but more commonly it was learned as an extracurricular subject purely out of interest, or through experience, often in navigation or surveying.⁷³

⁶⁸ Orme, *Medieval Schools*, 70-72.

⁶⁹ Thomas, "Numeracy in Early Modern England", 109.

⁷⁰ Orme, *Medieval Schools*, 68.

⁷¹ John Mellis, *A Briefe Instruction and Maner How to Keepe Books of Accompts After the Order of Debitor and Creditor* (John Windet, 1588), EEBO.

⁷² Basil S. Yamey, 'Peele, James (d. 1585)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004, accessed 6 February 2014; Yamey, 'Weddington, John (c. 1525- c. 1593)', *ODNB*, accessed 6 February 2014.

⁷³ E.G.R. Taylor, *The Mathematical Practitioners of Tudor and Stuart England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1954), 9-10.

Later, in the second quarter of the seventeenth century, one John Penkethman was working in London, both auditing and casting accounts for others, and as a translator of classical authors, indicating some familiarity with the grammar school curriculum.⁷⁴ These are but a small number of examples, of course, but what they indicate is that most higher-level numerical skills beyond basic arithmetic, such as casting accounts and book-keeping, could be learned at any point in one's life from a specialised teacher of the subject, and that in some cases, one could hire the skills of a professional to keep one's accounts.

Textbooks on the subject of accounting, like that revised by Mellis, or practical arithmetic for merchants, like that translated from the French by Weddington, also began to appear in the sixteenth century. In 1592 the schoolmaster William Kempe translated Ramus' *The Art of Arithmetick in Whole Numbers and Fractions*, a very practical work in terms of basic arithmetic, but not obviously aimed at merchants or those wishing to keep accounts, as the latter half of the book is more academic in nature. Keith Thomas argues that by the mid-sixteenth century the skill of keeping written rather than oral accounts was filtering down the social scale from the landed estates and corporate bodies to more humble trades, but how was it doing so if it was so infrequently taught?⁷⁵ John Brinsley believed that any skills beyond basic 'numeration', or being able to write and read numbers, were best taught at a 'cyphering school', perhaps those run by the teachers mentioned above.⁷⁶

⁷⁴ W.A.S Hewins, 'Penkethman, John (fl. 1623-68)', rev. Anita McConnell, *ODNB*, accessed 6 February 2014.

⁷⁵ Thomas, "Numeracy in Early Modern England", 106.

⁷⁶ Brinsley, *Ludus Literarius*, 26.

Perhaps instruction in numeracy simply did not fit with the aims of a grammar school, with the focus on classical languages, rhetoric, and communication skills, and the type of people those schools were meant to produce. If it was not taught there, was it part of the definition of ‘learned’, or was it considered an elementary subject, or one suited only to people bound for the trades or business? Apparently it was an academic subject at one time – Richard Mulcaster says that Plato saw arithmetic and geometry as the wings to heaven – yet educational treatises of the period do not mention it as part of an ideal education. Even Mulcaster, who was in favour of teaching more subjects than just Latin, does not mention anything mathematical among the subjects he would see taught in the schools, and speaks of the ‘learned’ and ‘Latin’ as if they just naturally went together.⁷⁷ Everyone should have reading and writing, ‘for religion sake, and their necessarie affaires’, but that was all. Mulcaster did envision a divide between the academic and the ‘mechanical’ when he claimed that only those who were fit for learning should carry on to attend the grammar schools: in other words, educate everyone according to their capacity and circumstances, which for some might involve instruction in a trade, or in subjects not offered in the grammar schools.⁷⁸ The fact that the grammar school curriculum included very little beyond linguistic, rhetorical, training, and that subjects like arithmetic or casting accounts were taught at an elementary level or were learned independently, could be interpreted as a distinction between learned and unlearned, formal and informal learning, and academic and mechanical arts. The

⁷⁷ Mulcaster, *Positions*, 33, 2-3.

⁷⁸ Mulcaster, *Positions*, 138, 141.

‘great schools’ like Eton, Winchester, and St Paul’s were even further distant from the apparently ‘mechanical’ arts, yet they are the schools which would in theory have had the resources with which to teach a wider range of subjects.

In works concerning the theory of elementary education, such as Edmund Coote’s *The English Schoolmaster* (1596), and Francis Clement’s *The Petie Schole* (1587), ‘numeration’ and casting accounts are mentioned, mainly with the aim of understanding large numbers written as Roman or Arabic numerals, and with calculating the values of different kinds of money. Coote discusses in one paragraph a basic approach to writing numbers, ‘numeration’, before cutting this short to explain difficult English words and provide a Biblical chronology; Clement discusses numeration also, but goes on to explain the use of counters in casting accounts, in some detail.⁷⁹ Neither Mulcaster nor Kempe refer to numerical instruction in their works on elementary education. Mulcaster’s *Elementarie* (1582), in fact, only discusses numbers once, in his description of how drawing ought to be taught, using the numbers and figures from arithmetic and geometry to teach drawing, which skill he acknowledges to be useful to architects, engravers, astronomers, and topographers.⁸⁰ It is rare to find such educational theorists mentioning numbers and casting accounts – an elementary education was an instruction in reading and writing English, while any further education consisted of the classical curriculum of the grammar school.

⁷⁹ Edmund Coote, *The English Schoole-maister Teaching all his Scholars, the Order of Distinct Reading, and True Writing our English Tongue* (Orwin, 1596), 65, EEBO; Francis Clement *The Petie Schole with an English Orthographie* (Thomas Vautroullier, 1587), 63-71, 71-90, EEBO.

⁸⁰ Mulcaster, *The First Part of the Elementarie Which Entreateth Chefelie of the Right Writing of Our English Tung, Set Furth by Richard Mulcaster* (Thomas Vautroullier, 1582), EEBO, 227.

This closely mirrors the approach to mathematical instruction found in Italy, where ‘abacus schools’ existed for ‘mercantile studies’, conducted in the vernacular by teachers who might have taken on teaching work if they had fallen into financial difficulty, and who might additionally write vernacular manuals for reading basic prayers as an alternative to the Latin versions taught in schools. ‘Abacus’ teachers were also part of the provision for reading instruction. The teachers of abacus schools were operating in a vernacular context running parallel with the classical instruction found in other educational institutions, and numerical skills, were, as a result, provided in an entirely different context and for very different reasons than Latin grammar.⁸¹ It was only later in the seventeenth century that there were any serious movements towards teaching mathematical subjects in the schools: Christ’s Hospital in London taught simple arithmetic, but not until the reign of Charles II, while in the 1670s, a teacher of mathematics, both pure and applied, one John Newton, complained that the schools did not teach enough (or any) mathematics, and he would advocate the inclusion of the subject in the grammar school curriculum, even making plans for a school of mathematics in Ross, Herefordshire, where he was the rector.⁸²

Could it be that some subjects, beyond Latin and religious instruction, were considered ideals, like Greek and Hebrew, and not taught by any but the most skilled schoolmasters? Rivington School taught singing as an extra subject, while the curriculum of Blackburn School included ‘arithmetic, geometry, cosmography, [and] introduction to the sphere’. It is not clear how much time, if

⁸¹ Black, *Humanism and Education in Medieval and Renaissance Italy*, 29, 35, 43.

⁸² Taylor, *Mathematical Practitioners*, ix, 225.

any, was actually devoted to these subjects or whether they were only taught to very bright students; Blackburn's curriculum appears to have been particularly full, including several Greek authors and Hebrew for those 'willing and fitt thereunto'.⁸³ The fact that the grammar schools largely confined themselves to a literary, classical, education, while instruction in other subjects was either found outside the schools or was considered to be for a decidedly separate purpose, indicates that the grammar schools were preparing a particular kind of student for a particular kind of life; they were not, in other words, the only way to train young people to contribute to the commonwealth, something which theorists like Mulcaster allude to but do not acknowledge directly. Arithmetic and accounts may have been practical skills, only necessary for certain occupations, but if that is true, were the grammar schools not also providing the practical skills for certain occupations, for future clergymen, lawyers, or schoolmasters? This is not to say that those who attended grammar schools and received a humanist education were entirely lacking in numerical skills, but were the grammar schools concerned with producing a certain kind of student, moulding a certain kind of person to be fit for a certain kind of life? I would argue that they were.

The curriculum of the typical grammar school did not change dramatically between the late fifteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Instead, it was the approach to the Latin curriculum which altered, as traditional methods of translation, memorization, and composition were practiced to different standards and with different texts. The state imposed a standard textbook, but did not do

⁸³ John Garstang, *A History of the Blackburn Grammar School Founded AD 1514* (Blackburn: North-East Lancashire Press, 1897), 43.

anything beyond this to standardize the rest of the curriculum, or to change elements of it. Nonetheless, there was a sense of uniformity among what individual schools taught, as they imitated what other, usually more influential, schools were teaching, and followed the examples of humanist educational theory. Despite the religious motivations behind founding or re-founding schools, the route to religious conformity sat alongside a very classical, non-Christian, curriculum, one which was furthermore kept very separate from other, more 'mechanical', forms of career preparation.

CHAPTER 2

RUNNING AND FUNDING A SCHOOL

Having established the main aims of a grammar school between the fifteenth and seventeenth centuries, this chapter moves towards the role of school founders and governors, and those on the administrative end of education, before returning to the experience of the schoolboys and the schoolmaster in the classroom. It will examine the process of establishing a school, and the development of school foundations over time. This chapter will begin by setting out the historiography surrounding the numbers of schools in the sixteenth century and the circumstances under which grammar schools were founded or re-founded. This will be followed by the types of educational establishments in existence before the Dissolution of the monasteries, and the effects of the Dissolution and the Chantry Acts on the availability of formal education. The similarities between different grammar schools in this period will be examined next, followed by analysis of the process of establishing and maintaining a school, including the founder's motivations, a school's sources of income, and how the schools were meant to be administered. School statutes, letters patent issued by the crown, and account books or minute books kept by school governors are the main sources for this information. In addition to how schools were founded, this chapter will also address the question of why they were established: Was it a charitable action to found a school? Was it a religious action, or one motivated by more secular needs, such as the good governance of the commonwealth? The chapter will conclude with an examination of these themes, which suggest that the founders of schools

and those in charge of the schools were involved in building up a national church, upholding the Protestant settlement, and ensuring the welfare and sound governance of the kingdom. The boys who attended them were thus part of a network of similarly-educated boys prepared for service to the commonwealth and the church.

Three key themes emerge within this chapter on the nature of school foundations during the sixteenth century: it was a period neither of revolution nor destruction in education, but stood somewhere between the two, as schools were in many cases replaced, rather than established anew; while there was no formal ‘system’ of schools as such, what establishments there were gradually became more standardized in their regulation and methods; finally, while individuals continued to found schools as they had done previously, towns began to petition the crown for the right to establish a school, resulting in the many ‘Royal’ grammar schools which still exist across the country. Ultimately grammar schools began to take on a role beyond the education of future clergy, or the teaching of poor boys for charitable reasons, and become institutions for educating those who would one day exercise authority, whether lay or clerical, in a newly Protestant England.

The Historiographical Background

The precise numbers of grammar schools, and the dates of their establishment, has been a long-standing issue in the historiography of early modern English education. A. F. Leach overestimated the number of schools that

were already in existence by the sixteenth century and which had been medieval foundations; he made a number of assumptions about medieval education which seriously distorted his view of sixteenth-century education. Leach assumed that all education in the middle ages had been provided by grammar schools, that all chantries had had schools attached to them, that all the cathedrals had provided education, and that the monasteries had not provided any teaching at all. Leach was trying to dispel the prevailing view in the nineteenth century that there were no grammar schools in the middle ages and that formal education only really began in the sixteenth century, but he took too extreme a view in trying to disprove this, presenting a view which was almost as inaccurate.

The sixteenth century has traditionally been seen by historians as a time of educational expansion, a time of more school foundations than ever before. Lawrence Stone referred to the period 1560-1640 as the 'educational revolution', while David Cressy describes a more moderate increase in educational opportunity in the same period; Patrick Collinson argued that 'schooling was on the increase' at least in urban areas.¹ To some extent, these arguments still hold true: there certainly was a great interest in this period in providing education through founding and re-founding grammar schools, but this was not a new phenomenon in the sixteenth century, and it would be an overstatement to call the later sixteenth century an 'educational revolution'.

It was the fifteenth century which witnessed an increase in the number of schools founded, particularly by lay people, and which saw the model of the

¹ Stone, "The Educational Revolution", 41-80; Cressy, "Educational Opportunity", 301-320; Patrick Collinson, *The Birthpangs of Protestant England: Religious and Cultural Change in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1988), 47.

endowed free school emerge as the pattern for subsequent school foundations. The sixteenth century took this earlier expansion and adapted it to the circumstances of the era: in particular, the increasing need for educated men in government, and the need to spread and instill the religious policies and doctrines of the Church of England. Sixteenth-century school founders had a model to work with in the endowed free grammar schools established in increasing numbers in the previous century. The change was already underway in the fifteenth century. *That* was the time of growing interest in endowing schools, an interest which intensified and took on a more uniform and official role in the sixteenth century.

Leach's work made some sweeping claims, such as 'Henry VIII's chief work in education consisted in re-foundation and improvement, not in creation of new schools, but he did it on a scale which entitles him to the praise of being, in a sense, the greatest of school founders'². This is a vast overstatement: the real educational contribution of Henry's reign should actually be considered the standard grammar textbook, Lily's *Grammar*, but the statement about re-founding schools is true for his reign. More of this re-founding was done under his son than under him, although Henry did establish schools in cathedrals during his re-organization of England's dioceses.

One very important fact to bear in mind when determining how old a school is is that many of the schools believed to have been founded in the reigns of Henry VIII, Edward VI, or Elizabeth I were in fact *re*-foundations, usually of a chantry or guild school or simply an existing grammar school, founded anew in the king's or queen's name. Letters patent for a Royal Grammar School may date

² Leach, *The Schools of Medieval England*, 310.

from the middle of the sixteenth century, but the school itself may in some cases be much older. Richard Mulcaster's claim in 1581 that 'We have no great cause to complaine for number of schooles and founders... For during the time of her maiesties most fortunate reign already, there hath been mo' schooles erected then all the rest be, that were before her time in the whole Realme' is not, therefore, entirely accurate: while there certainly were new foundations during Elizabeth's reign, many other schools had actually been founded much earlier.³ This is the case for many such schools which even today bear the name of a Tudor monarch. Leach, however, took this too far in presuming that *no* schools were founded by Henry VIII, or Edward VI, but were *all* medieval foundations and owed nothing to the Reformation. This made his research fit with his firm belief that many grammar schools were founded in the middle ages and not the sixteenth century, but it was largely incorrect. While Leach overemphasized the extent of *re*-foundations, the fact that so many schools during the sixteenth century were in fact re-founded is very important. Prior to the Reformation, the chantry schools were endowed by chantries, the guild schools were endowed by guilds, and the only school in a town might have been run by a monastery: thus, when these sources of income were removed after the Dissolution and the Chantry Acts, the schools in question would need re-founding, and re-endowing, if they were to remain in operation.

It is difficult to determine the numbers of re-foundations compared with new foundations; the foundation date of a Free Grammar School of Edward VI, for instance, might be easy to determine, but whether or not the town where such

³ Mulcaster, *Positions*, 229.

a school was founded had had a school before that is often harder to establish, since it is often difficult to trace the records of a school's earlier existence. Of the schools which regularly appear as examples in this thesis, approximately half seem to have been founded in places which already had schools, rather than filling in a gap in school provision. The schools listed in Nicholas Carlisle's *A Concise Description of the Endowed Grammar Schools in England and Wales* tend to be dated by their re-foundation date, even if there is evidence that the school was operating earlier, as at St Paul's and Blackburn, for instance, yet a look through Nicholas Orme's list of schools which were in existence in the middle ages and up until 1530 shows a great deal of overlap with Carlisle's list: as many as one half to two-thirds of the schools which Carlisle dates to the reigns of Edward VI and Elizabeth I appear in Orme's list as having been around much earlier, although the evidence for how continuously these earlier schools were operating is less definitive.⁴ This is, of course, by no means anywhere near a precise estimate of the number of schools which were re-foundations as compared with new ones, but it does serve to illustrate that schools which are assumed to have been mid- to late-Tudor foundations may in fact have been much older, or that a town might have gained a royal grammar school after 1547 but had already had a school of some kind operating there before.

Appreciating the significance of *re*-foundations illustrates two things: first, it further demolishes the outdated claim that education in England began in earnest after the Reformation. Second, it illustrates an interest, from those in

⁴ Carlisle, *Concise Description*; Orme, *Medieval Schools*, 346-72. Carlisle lists his schools by county- a look at the schools for Yorkshire (all four ridings), Hampshire, Shropshire, and Oxfordshire, compared against those same schools in Orme's list show that half the schools included in Carlisle's study as being post-Henrician foundations also appear in Orme's study as being around in the middle ages; for the four ridings of Yorkshire this figure is closer to two-thirds.

authority, in the use of schools to implement the new religious policies of the 1540s onwards. In some cases, new schools were being established where there had not been schools before, but in many cases existing schools were being adapted to sixteenth-century circumstances, as a fifteenth-century trend was diverted in a new direction, under some measure of control from the church and state, free from any links to pre-Reformation chantries or guilds, and providing instruction relevant to a Protestant, humanist-educated commonwealth.

The Dissolution and the Chantry Acts

There were various types of schools in the early sixteenth century, the numbers and types of which were altered during the Reformation. Besides the endowed grammar school, there were schools attached to religious houses and collegiate churches, providing instruction of a largely religious nature, but also in grammar. The grammar school, of course, is the focus here. The model or pattern for founding a grammar school tended to depend on the founder, whether they founded a chantry where the priest also taught grammar, endowed a school alongside an almshouse or hospital, founded an entirely new school, or re-endowed an existing school. The endowed grammar school, generally founded by an individual with royal approval and run by governors, a schoolmaster, and an usher is the pattern which predominated during the sixteenth century, but even this ‘model’ of school could vary in its patronage and administration. It is worth discussing how the different types of formal education in England disappeared, appeared, or re-appeared during the sixteenth century.

Schools attached to religious houses were among those that disappeared. More free grammar schools appeared, some new, some on the sites of old guild or chantry schools, and when the dioceses were reorganized under Henry VIII, new schools were founded on the sites of former abbeys, as at Gloucester and Westminster, and at re-founded cathedrals, including Canterbury and Durham. Some chantry priests had begun providing education, often for only a short time before the 1540s, but if it was of an elementary nature, in reading or song, such schools were the ones shut down by the chantry commissioners. Instruction in reading or song was easily found elsewhere: either at home, or in informal and often temporary schools run out of someone's home or a church. The chantries themselves were no longer allowed, so these priests were pensioned off. The chantries whose priests had been teaching grammar, on the other hand, were generally allowed to continue as schools.

It is worth discussing chantry schools briefly, because many free grammar schools founded before 1546 (the date of the first chantry certificates), although not technically chantry schools, had some kind of connection with a chantry, even if the chantry was just the source of its income, or operated in a similar fashion to a chantry school, with the schoolmaster taking on priestly responsibilities alongside his teaching duties in the same foundation. This type of establishment is first seen in the fourteenth century, where a wealthy benefactor would found a chantry, with its endowment going towards paying a priest to say masses for the founder's soul; an additional charitable element was added when the priest was expected to teach grammar to the local boys. By the early sixteenth century, it tended to be the other way around, where the chantry function was added to an

existing grammar school. A school was not automatically a chantry school because its schoolmaster carried out services in the church and prayed for the founder's soul in addition to teaching grammar, but many schools did operate in this way; the chantry school set-up is mirrored in other non-chantry schools. The religious duties of the masters at Warrington and Malpas schools, for instance, are extensive, but neither of these schools were part of a chantry foundation. Nor was the Crypt School, Gloucester, founded at around the same time (1528), although the master there was to be paid less if he was a layman.⁵ The chantry school, as well as schools like Malpas and Warrington founded in the late 1520s, was a charitable and pious type of foundation: local boys, who may in some cases have been poor, were provided with an education, which would give them the ability to enter into employment in the church, the law, or government; this education was free, which was charitable in itself, and in addition the master was fulfilling a priestly role, providing masses and praying for the founder's soul. Leach assumed that if a chantry had a school at the Reformation, then all chantries had always had schools. This is not the case, as many chantries only became schools quite late in their history, and thus had not been operating as schools for very long by the time of the Chantries Act, such as Blackburn School in Lancashire, for instance, founded in 1514. With many of the pre-Reformation foundations, the definition of a chantry school is somewhat blurred, because some schools, such as the three discussed above, required a great deal of priestly duties of their schoolmaster,

⁵ Cheshire RO, SL382/18/1 Warrington Boteler school foundation deed, 1526; Cheshire RO, DCH/C/446 Malpas Grammar School foundation charter, 1527; Orme, *Education in the West of England 1066-1548* (Exeter: University of Exeter, 1976), 140.

sounding, particularly in the case of Malpas, very similar to chantries, yet mentioning nothing about chantries in their foundation documents.

At the Dissolution, several opportunities for education were shut down. This was more of an indirect process, as schools became caught up in the more general attack on religious houses.⁶ Grammar education was no longer provided in monastic or collegiate church schools, and did not always continue if the school was formerly attached to a chantry. This is in complete contrast to the argument of Leach, who believed that monastic institutions did not provide any education, so their dissolution did not affect educational opportunity. But it is in fact the case that education was disrupted considerably because of the dissolution; it was restored, through re-foundations, but it was reduced in the immediate aftermath of the dissolution, as places which had formerly provided grammar instruction became divested of their endowments if those endowments were part of dissolved foundations. Some chantry or guild schools were abolished completely. Some were not, and were converted into schools only, on a sort of case by case basis. This was in part dependent on how much grammar had been taught there before the dissolution, and partially on how much of the school's endowment had come from the dissolved chantry or guild.

Nunneries for girls and abbots' houses for boys had been educational options for children of the gentry prior to their dissolution; after 1546-8 they were no longer in a position to provide education. Both church choristers and other children might be sent to almonry schools to learn grammar, but eventually the almonry schools were gone. Grammar schools run by religious houses or

⁶ Nicholas Orme and Margaret Webster, *The English Hospital, 1070-1570* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1995), 155.

hospitals, such as that at St Leonard's Hospital in York, were closed down, and, contrary to what Leach would have us believe, religious houses had been providers of education prior to the Reformation. These last schools may have had a professional schoolmaster, but were run by the religious house, or had a lay founder who had entrusted the school to the monastery's care. Schoolmasters were pensioned off as employees of the abbey or monastery in question, but it is estimated that educational places for at least 5000 children were gone after the Dissolution of the monasteries.⁷ How much the religious houses had provided education has been a subject of debate, with Leach dismissing their educational role almost entirely, as discussed above, although it is clear from more recent work that they did in fact play an important role in educating children.⁸ To justify the dismantling of the monastic system and its replacement with more schools (which was accomplished, though somewhat slowly and belatedly), Thomas Starkey declared in the mid 1530s that the original founders of monasteries had wanted their foundations to be places of virtuous Christian learning, and that they had strayed from that ideal, so they were being, he believed, rightfully returned to their original use by being converted into schools.⁹ The revenues of former religious houses might also be used towards the endowment of a grammar school, as at Shrewsbury in 1552, where the revenue of the former college of St Mary and St Chad was used to fund the new school.¹⁰

⁷ Orme, *Medieval Schools*, 300.

⁸ See for instance Orme, *Medieval Schools*, ch. 8 "The Religious Orders and Education", 255-287.

⁹ Simon, *Education and Society in Tudor England*, 162.

¹⁰ Oldham, *A History of Shrewsbury School 1552-1952* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell & Mott, 1952), 1-2.

Some schools survived the dissolution of the chantries in 1546-8, while others were disendowed. This seems to have been decided on a case-by-case basis, depending on whether the chantry priest taught grammar or whether he only provided instruction in religion and singing; the existing curriculum was an important factor in determining whether the priest would be able to keep a grammar school when relieved of his chantry duties. The school at Whalley in Lancashire was among those which were allowed to continue, despite having its endowments from a chantry confiscated. The commissioners assigned to Lancashire in 1548, Walter Mildmay and Robert Keyleways, found that at Whalley, a school was ‘continually kept’, the master (who was not necessarily a chantry priest) paid £13. 6s. 8d, and that the school was in general ‘very meet and necessary to be continuous’; the master, William Thules, could stay on with the same stipend. A document of 1570/1 confirms this decision of the Edwardine chantry commissioners.¹¹ Whalley, therefore, had a grammar school, with some of its income coming from a chantry endowment before 1548.¹² It was thus at risk under the Chantries Act, but allowed to continue, though it would later be re-founded under Edward VI.

Blackburn, also in Lancashire, had a chantry school founded in 1514. Thomas, Earl of Derby was involved in its foundation, and the priest had to be expert in singing plainsong and pricksong, and was to pray daily for the Earl and his wife.¹³ By about 1548, the chapel of Our Lady in Blackburn had a priest who

¹¹ Lancashire RO, DDX 250/1, letters patent for Whalley School confirming grant made in the second year of the reign of Edward VI, 1585.

¹² Simon, *Education and Society in Tudor England*, 224.

¹³ Lancashire RO, DDBK 1/1, agreement between Thomas Earl of Derby and the church reeves of the parish church of Blackburn, 1514.

was to teach grammar and keep a ‘songe scole’ ‘if such a one could be hadde and if not then a songe scole’ only. At some point between 1514 and 1548, then, the chantry priest took on the duties of teaching grammar. Like many chantry priests, he had not been doing so since the chantry was founded, as Leach would argue, because the chantry had not been founded with education in mind. The document in the Lancashire Record Office which prescribes this arrangement is described in the catalogue description as the disendowment of the school under the Chantries Act, thus leading one to presume that the school did not continue past the dissolution of the chantries. This is particularly possible if it placed so much emphasis on song rather than grammar, on knowing how to sing masses and pray for the founder’s soul. But the chantry school at Blackburn *was* allowed to continue after 1548. It was re-founded in 1567 as the Free Grammar School of Queen Elizabeth, and land was purchased to pay the schoolmaster’s salary, by then in arrears; the disendowment referred to could have been the confiscation of the endowment derived from the chantry.¹⁴ If such an endowment were confiscated, the school would struggle to stay open as a free school, so it would be in need of re-foundation on financial grounds, which helps to explain in part the sudden increase in re-founded, ‘royal’, grammar schools, previously discussed.

The Royal Grammar School, as a distinct type of educational foundation, was a result of the new drive for uniformity in religion, both filling in the educational gaps caused by the Dissolution and Chantry Acts and adding to the number of schools in the country. In the case of a Royal Grammar School, the

¹⁴ Lancashire RO, DDBK 4/2, decree confirming disendowment of Blackburn School under the Chantry Act, 1585. On the school’s continuous operation between 1514 and 1567, see Orme, *Medieval Schools*, 349; William Farrer and J. Brownbill, eds., *The Victoria History of the County of Lancaster* (8 vols., London: University of London Institute of Historical Research, 1966), II, 590, 6, 235-44.

monarch was the founder, in the sense that he or she issued the letters patent allowing particular men from the town in question to acquire a certain amount of land (sometimes particular lands are specified), the rents from which would go towards paying the schoolmaster and maintaining the school. This is really all the letters patent concern themselves with, the legal and financial elements of school founding; the rules of the school, the requirements of the master, and the curriculum, and all the things concerning how the school actually operated in practice were left to the governors in charge of the school, to write down at a later date. The governors still had to operate within a certain set of rules, in that the master would have to be licensed, they would have to use the official grammar, and there would be a visitation of the school at some point to ensure the school was running in an orthodox manner. So the crown involved itself in a fairly limited way, providing a legal framework within which schools would operate, while the details were left to the founder, the governors, or the local people and their clergy. But the fact that the crown was making itself involved in this way was new in the sixteenth century, and the resulting Royal Grammar Schools, established in the king or queen's name, sometimes on the site of old schools and sometimes where there had not been a school before, are a new theme in English grammar school education after the 1540s.

Another result of the Chantry Commissioners' reports between 1547 and 1548 was the establishment of grammar schools in cathedral towns, where there was not already a grammar school in or near the cathedral. These schools, as well as existing cathedral schools, continued to train choristers (provided they were instructed in grammar as well), but no longer prepared its students for eventually

taking orders, and became free schools if previously they had been fee-paying.¹⁵

An ambitious plan was in order even before this, in 1539, when it was proposed that monasteries such as those at Canterbury, Durham, and Westminster be re-founded as cathedrals, with schools alongside. This plan was not carried out exactly as envisioned, but it still resulted in several new schools, which varied in the amounts of their endowments but which all followed curricula similar to the grammar schools. These new cathedral schools provided an education very similar to that found in the free grammar schools at the time, and were structured and organized in a similar fashion, being free, with a master, learned in Latin and Greek, chosen by the cathedral's dean and chapter, an usher, and scholarships to attend one of the universities. It was envisioned that each school would have seventy scholars, following the model of Winchester and Eton.¹⁶ The fact that these new cathedral schools, caused by the re-foundation of monasteries and abbeys and by the founding of new cathedrals, were essentially new grammar schools when viewed from the perspective of their curriculum, suggests that the older pattern of free grammar schools, chantry schools, monastic schools, and cathedral schools was being replaced by a more uniform network of free grammar schools, and perhaps also that the older pattern of educational institutions lent itself well to being re-invented as a network of grammar schools. It also illustrates the fact that the curriculum of a school may have been more important than the type or method of its foundation.

¹⁵ Orme, *Medieval Schools*, 317.

¹⁶ Orme, *Medieval Schools*, 305-7.

Why Are The Schools So Similar?

The similarities between many school statutes, with their body of governors and a master and usher, are very noticeable. The reasons for founding schools are described throughout the Tudor period in very similar terms, and the content of statutes and foundation documents likewise remains similar during this period. Royal letters patent for free grammar schools sound so much alike, as they are legal documents and their language and content are by nature formulaic and standard. They usually state the motivation for founding the school, which was frequently that the townspeople petitioned the monarch for the right to establish a school, and use the standard justification of ‘bringing up youth in good learning’; they then go on to specify how the school was to be governed, and how many teachers it should have, and who was to choose them. They then give, in the monarch’s name, power to the school governors to acquire a certain amount of land for the maintenance of the school, as well as the power to make more detailed statutes.

These statutes are generally far more detailed than letters patent in terms of the actual running of the school and the teaching conducted therein. They can be mined for details of the curriculum of a school, as seen in the previous chapter, but they are also revealing of the requirements and expectations of the schoolmaster, and in some cases the name of the first master appointed, as well as the religious instruction of the students, the overall purpose of the school, and why the founder wished to establish it (if it was founded through private initiative). While letters patent are issued in the monarch’s name and are thus very

similar to one another, the statutes and rules made by an individual after receiving the letters patent also have a tendency to sound very similar, almost as if the founders of the schools were copying one another. Nicholas Orme argues that the fifteenth-century growth in grammar school endowments established patterns on which later school endowments were based, remaining in use well after their original medieval context no longer existed.¹⁷ The similarity in content and wording and aims of the documents discussed here does bear this argument out, that school founders had very similar models to follow.

Similarity between schools is seen in the forms of organization and administration, forms of patronage, justification for founding the school and the benefits it would bring to the area, or the curriculum used there. Regarding the curriculum, the ubiquity of Lily's *Grammar* would imply a degree of similarity in descriptions of what should be taught, but this was the case even well before a standard textbook was prescribed, as smaller schools attempted to follow the ideal humanist curricula of the 'great' schools like Winchester and Eton. The statutes for Warrington and Malpas schools, founded in 1526 and 1527 respectively, list identical reasons for the founding of their respective schools: that, through their education, the boys there might become 'a lanthorn of good example in virtuous living'.¹⁸ How much is this similarity just standard legal or rhetorical terms, and how much reflects the actual practice of school founders, officials, and administrators deliberately copying each other or some other source? Certain schools like Eton and St Paul's began to set the pattern for the ideal curriculum in

¹⁷ Orme, *Medieval Schools*, 254.

¹⁸ Cheshire RO, SL382/18/1, Warrington Boteler School foundation deed. Malpas reads 'lanterns of good example in virtuous living'. Cheshire RO, [DCH/C/446](#), Malpas School foundation charter.

smaller schools; the statutes of the Merchant Taylors' school in London were copied directly from those for St Paul's school. Clergy who were in charge of more than one school spread what was happening at one school over to another. But is this copying of certain elements like curriculum and justification for the school's existence a conscious decision by the founders, and if so, why? How much of the statutes is just rhetoric and general phrases, and how much actually reflects practice?

The founder of the school at Week St Mary, Cornwall, in 1506, had the model of Macclesfield school to copy: her husband had been involved in Macclesfield's foundation three years previously, and thus Week St Mary's founder copied such arrangements as eighteen feoffees to appoint the master, the then-uncommon specification that the master be a university graduate, the prayers used by the boys and the rule that they attend church three times a day, and even some of the wording of the statutes.¹⁹ In this case, the founder had connections with another, recently established, school. We see similar connections throughout the country and across the sixteenth century: schools, not necessarily close geographically, but under the authority of the same bishop, or founded by the same person, bearing a very distinct similarity to one another. Is this a conscious decision on the part of the founders? The wording of the foundation documents is often merely legal convention. But the intentions of the founders, the purposes of the schools, the books studied there, and the methods used – all these elements were copied more and more by different schools, as the local institution of the

¹⁹ Orme, *Education in the West of England*, 176-7.

‘grammar school’ began to be used in building a national church and a network of people educated for its continuance.

This raises the question of whether the grammar schools were meant to serve a ‘national’ or a ‘local’ purpose. Earlier schools were more local in their focus, as individual founders, whether lay or clerical, founded schools for the benefit of the local area; this trend continued throughout the sixteenth century with clerical founders establishing schools in their birthplaces (Hawkshead, St Bee’s) or areas to which they had a connection (Holgate’s links with Old Malton, Hemsworth, and York). It is also seen in the stipulations, found in many school statutes, that the students be from the town or parish in which the school was located, with outside students often being fee-paying at a school which was otherwise free to locals. During the sixteenth century, however, new influences on education, such as humanism and the Reformation, resulted in schools starting to have a more uniform character across the kingdom. The humanist curriculum of rhetoric and eloquence worked its way into the curricula of even the smaller schools, influenced by institutions such as Magdalen College School and St Paul’s School, and the ‘great’ schools like Eton and Winchester. The need to maintain, and spread knowledge of, the new church settlements of the mid-sixteenth century was responsible for the greater diocesan control over what was being taught in the schools, and by whom. There was not a formal ‘system’ of education in this period, although there were official school books: Lily’s *Grammar*, Nowell’s Catechism, and the King’s Primer. Local grammar schools were becoming part, as discussed above, of a network of people educated to exercise both secular and clerical authority, both of which, following Patrick Collinson, were of equal

importance for the benefit of a Christian commonwealth, instructed in the official faith, and ready to serve the commonweal in their own God-given capacity.²⁰

School Founders

Between the late fifteenth and early seventeenth centuries, grammar schools could be founded by a number of methods: through a local petition to the crown for letters patent, through the efforts and authority of the courts of augmentations and the chantry commissioners, or by an individual. A grammar school, whether free or fee-paying, could, in theory, be founded by anyone with the financial means and inclination to do so. In practice, these school founders came from both the clergy and the laity, continuing a pattern which had begun in the later middle ages. If a member of the clergy was founding a school, he tended to be of fairly high standing within the church. The founders of the schools at St Paul's and Ruthin, for instance, were both Deans; the schools at Rivington, Bruton, and Tadcaster were all founded by bishops, and Archbishops Holgate, Sandys, and Grindal were also school founders. But alongside this, lay founders were just as common, coming sometimes, but not always, from the local gentry. When the letters patent, or statutes, or similar foundation documents describe why the school was founded, they tend to use a very conventional language of bringing up and instructing the youth of the parish. But a closer look at who the founders were, and where they were from or where they spent part of their lives, will usually indicate that they had some connection to the place in which they were

²⁰ Collinson, *Godly People: Essays on English Protestantism and Puritanism* (London: Hambledon Press, 1983), 446.

founding their school, usually being from the place originally. This interest in the local community where one formerly or currently resided will be discussed further below, as it may indicate a charitable interest. When a bishop or archbishop founded a school, he tended to be motivated by a desire to promote and regulate religious instruction, particularly during the Elizabethan period and in areas where the Reformation had not taken hold as firmly as might have been desired. But even while this was the case with the archiepiscopal foundations at Hawkshead and St Bee's, those schools were both established in their founder's birthplace, thus, a national concern addressed very locally.

Looking at the types of grammar school foundations and their distribution across the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, three main patterns emerge. The first is that individual founders, whether lay or clerical, were present throughout the sixteenth century. This is a holdover from the fifteenth century increase in school foundations, as most of those had also been by individuals, whether lay or clergy. There was an increase in clerical foundations, however, after the middle of the sixteenth century. The second is that petitions from either individuals or from towns or parishes and the resulting 'royal grammar schools' began with Edward VI in the 1540s and continued at least until the reign of James I. The third is that the re-foundation of existing grammar schools began in the 1540s also. These last two patterns can be explained by the fact that this was when schools connected with chantries or monastic houses were losing their endowments from these institutions because of the Dissolution or the Chantry Acts. If a school was shut down completely, the town, or an individual on the

town's behalf, might petition the crown for a school, as at Ripon, Heath, and Wakefield, to name only a few.

Thus we have individual founders establishing schools throughout the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, founders both lay and clerical. There is a slight increase in the prevalence of clerical school founders later in the century, but not a dramatic one. Two new trends, of towns petitioning the crown for a grammar school, and of existing schools being re-founded in the crown's name, emerged in the 1540s as previous sources of education were removed. Founders could also specify the rules for the school, or certain elements of the curriculum, although it is rare, particularly in the latter half of the century, to see anything very out of the ordinary specified by a founder. The books in use for grammar instruction and catechizing were officially prescribed, the choice of schoolmaster was strictly controlled, and visitations of the school by its governors would find out if anything unorthodox was being done in the school, so it would be difficult for a founder to insist on anything very unusual in terms of curriculum or organization.

The Endowed School – Income and Administration

There were various ways in which a grammar school might be funded, although these nearly always depended on land, and the rents thereon, and some initial financial support from the founder or through money raised by subscription from the local people. Very often such schools were free, with the students paying only a small amount as an entrance fee, 4d usually being the conventional amount.

The usher of Holgate's school in York, for example, was to receive £4 per year and the schoolmaster £12, to be paid out of the rents on the lands belonging to the school; the master of Guisborough school was similarly to receive £10 per year.²¹ Common forms of endowment included bequests from wealthy individuals, money being provided within a founder's lifetime, or lands given by the crown through letters patent, in the case of a town's petition for a school. In some cases these lands were former chantry lands, such as at the free grammar school at Ripon, endowed by Mary I and Philip of Spain in 1556. This land was by then in the possession of numerous individuals, but the school's foundation document makes it clear that these were the lands formerly of the 'late chantry of the Assumption of the vyrgyn Mary in Ryppon', 'the late chantry of St James the Appostle in Ripon', as well as the chantries of St John the Evangelist and the Blessed Virgin Mary, both also in Ripon. Other former chantry lands may have been used to fund the school, through they are never specified, as well as other unspecified lands in Yorkshire.²² This is a fairly isolated example, however, as in most cases, school endowments after the Dissolution are not specified as being former chantry lands. The endowed school, funded by rents on land assigned by the founder for the purpose, was the most common type of grammar school foundation in the sixteenth century.

If the endowment money was used to pay the master and usher, and to repair the school building, then the school was a free school. The endowment often made it possible for a school to be free, but 'endowed' and 'free' are not

²¹ Borthwick, Bp. Sch. 53, 1, 3, Holgate's School foundation charter; Borthwick, Bp. Sch. 18, 9, Guisborough School foundation charter.

²² Borthwick, RGS A/1/4, 2, Ripon Grammar School charter, 1555, later translation.

interchangeable terms. In some cases an endowed school might be a fee-paying school, such as Ruthin in 1574, or Shrewsbury by 1562, where the fees were based in the incomes of the boys' families.²³ Holgate's schoolmaster in York was to teach grammar 'and other knowleges and godly lernynge', and was not to take any money from any student 'thither resorting to learne and know the same' – thus fulfilling the definition of a free school.²⁴ Part of the schoolmaster's oath at Guisborough was that he not take any payments from the students, but only those which were laid out in the statutes, presumably the 4d admission fee, but nothing further.²⁵

The exact nature of an endowment could of course vary greatly. The free school at Halsham, provided for in the wills of Lady Katherine Constable and her husband in 1590 and 1579 respectively, was to be funded by the rents on Lady Katherine's lands and run alongside her husband's almshouse.²⁶ The exact manner in which the school was to be governed is not stated, and nor is the curriculum; this would make sense, however, given that it is a will, and not a set of statutes. Robert Pursglove's school at Guisborough was also an almshouse, described throughout its foundation deed as a 'scole and almeshouse or hospitall'; the endowment was for both institutions.²⁷ In the case of Guisborough, its founder paid detailed attention to the curriculum of the school, indicating that the quality of the teaching was just as important as the relief provided to the poor people

²³ "Ruthin School Rules", in Sylvester, *Educational Documents*, 110; Shropshire Record Office, Shrewsbury, D 35.7 *Shrewsbury School Regestrum Scholarium*, 1562-1635.

²⁴ Borthwick, Bp. Sch. 53, 1, Holgate's School foundation charter.

²⁵ Borthwick, Bp. Sch. 18, 7, Guisborough School foundation charter.

²⁶ Borthwick, Bp. Sch. 23, 1, documents concerning the endowment of Halsham Free School, 1579, 1590, 1625, 18th-c. copies.

²⁷ Borthwick, Bp. Sch. 18, 4, Guisborough School foundation charter.

maintained in the almshouse. Traditionally there had been more attention paid to hospitals than to schools in terms of charitable endeavors and foundations, a trend which began to break down in around the fifteenth century.²⁸ Tadcaster Grammar School, founded as a ‘Schoole and hospital or almshouse of our Savior Jesus Christ’, included up to twelve poor people on its foundation in 1596, and while its statutes do not detail the curriculum beyond those books and authors ‘allowed to be taught for the Instructinge of youth’, they do insist on the good conduct of those maintained on the foundation. There were to be no ‘brawlers, chiders, nor drunkards’, and all were expected to attend church every day, receiving three warnings if they did not conduct themselves well.²⁹ This is similar to the expectations for Guisborough’s poor people, as well as the students there. Foundations like Guisborough and Tadcaster, both described as ‘school and hospital or almshouse’, may imply a desire for social control, with a certain number of poor people charitably maintained at the almshouse, but with strict guidelines for their good behaviour, and daily requirements to pray; these are holdovers from the medieval hospitals. The poor people were being instructed morally as much as the schoolboys were, but were also looked after. This had a charitable purpose, also a remnant from earlier in the century.

The founder of an endowed school would specify that it was to be governed by a certain number of men, generally called the governors, but occasionally known as ‘wardens’ or ‘guardians’. Archbishop Holgate’s school in York was run with the authority of the clergy and civic authorities; at this school,

²⁸ Orme and Webster, *The English Hospital*, 144-146.

²⁹ Borthwick, Bp. Sch. 45, 1, 18th-c. copy of Tadcaster Grammar School statutes, 1596; Margaret Clarke, ‘Oglethorpe, Owen (1502/3-1559)’, *ODNB*, accessed 7 September 2012.

it was the schoolmaster and his successors in that office who were given a common seal and made a corporate body, not a body of governors.³⁰ Holgate laid out an elaborate chain of authority, with himself and successive archbishops of York at the top, followed by the dean and chapter of York, the mayor and aldermen of the city, and finally the archdeacon and twelve ‘honest and substantial householders’ of the parish in which the school was to be located. These men had the authority to chose the schoolmaster, try the faults of the usher, or deprive an errant schoolmaster of his office, effectively functioning as governors of the school.³¹ In some cases these governors, or the bailiffs of the town (as at Shrewsbury), were empowered to make statutes and rules for the school at a later date, usually within a certain number of years from the initial foundation of the school; letters patent for royal grammar schools follow a similar pattern: while the crown was, nominally, the founder, the governors of the school were given the power to make the actual statutes touching the running of the school.

A system of governors was the most common way to oversee a school’s operation; the number of governors ranged from as many as fifty at Blackburn in 1567 to two at Brentwood in 1558.³² Ten men of the parish of Ripon were appointed by Queen Mary in 1556 as governors of the free grammar school at Ripon, all of them gentlemen or esquires.³³ These men were responsible for the

³⁰ Borthwick, Bp. Sch. 53, 1, Holgate’s School foundation charter.

³¹ Borthwick, Bp. Sch. 53, 2, Holgate’s School foundation charter.

³² Lancashire RO, DDBK 1/3, letters patent from Elizabeth I to the parish of Blackburn 1567; “Foundation of Brentwood School, 1558”, in David C. Douglas, ed., *English Historical Documents 1485-1558* (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1967), 1064-65.

³³ Borthwick, RGS A/1/4, 1, Ripon School charter.

lands and goods associated with the school, although just one of them, Anthony Frankish, gentleman, seems to have been given the authority to appoint and nominate the schoolmaster and usher; Frankish presented a petition to the king and queen from the people of Ripon to establish a grammar school there, and he is singled out in the preamble to the endowment for this reason.³⁴ The school at Ripon was run by a combination of royal and clerical authority, since it was founded by royal letters patent, while the Archbishop of York was given the power to make rules touching the ‘order, government and direction of the scholemaster and usher and of the schollers’, as well as given a say regarding the school’s lands and the payments to the master and usher.³⁵ Edwyn Sandys, Archbishop of York in Elizabeth’s reign, appointed his eldest son, Samuel, two ‘gentilmen’, and five yeomen as governors of his school at Hawkshead, in charge of the goods and revenues of the school, and forming a body corporate with full legal privileges and a common seal.³⁶ Robert Pursglove’s school at Guisborough was part of an almshouse, as was the school at Halsham in Yorkshire, and it was run by ten wardens in very similar capacities to the governors of the schools discussed above.³⁷

Often, providing an education for the ‘children and youths’ of a certain area was a good thing, well appreciated by those whose sons would benefit from this school. Occasionally, however, it was not. Whether this was due to financial pressure, or simply lack of interest among the local people in maintaining a school

³⁴ Borthwick, RGS A/1/4, 1, Ripon School charter.

³⁵ Borthwick, RGS A/1/4, 1, Ripon School charter.

³⁶ Borthwick, Bp. Sch. 25, 1, Hawkshead School foundation charter.

³⁷ Borthwick, Bp. Sch. 18, 4, Guisborough School foundation charter; Borthwick, Bp. Sch. 23, 1, endowment of Halsham Free School.

and sending their children there, there were some instances where newly endowed schools struggled to stay in operation shortly after their foundation. Heath School, near Halifax, was one such school. The situation at Heath illustrates what was necessary for a grammar school in terms of its funding and administration, as well as shedding some light on who would take interest in a grammar school (or not) and for what reasons. The Free Grammar School of Queen Elizabeth at Heath, was granted Letters Patent from the Queen in 1585; according to the preamble to the letters, they were procured by petition from the parish and vicarage of Halifax, near Heath, for the teaching of boys from Halifax, the adjoining villages, and ‘other our faithful and liege people whomsoever they be’. It was to have twelve governors, chosen from among the men of the parish, who could chose the schoolmaster and usher and make the statutes for the school.³⁸ There is nothing unusual about this; other schools, such as Ripon, were also founded by the ‘humble petition’ of the townspeople, which was then presented to the monarch by a member of the nobility, and Heath follows the conventional pattern of schoolmaster, usher, and, in this case, twelve governors.

These twelve governors, however, were lacking two very important things: an endowment, and statutes. Heath School is unusual in not having an original endowment, in the sense of a specific set of lands, whether from the crown, or from a founder. The school was founded because of a town petition, fulfilled by the crown, and as such the Queen was officially the founder: one Henry Farrer procured and paid for the Letters Patent, with the help of a nobleman at court

³⁸ West Yorkshire Archives, Halifax, HTH 1, Letters Patent for Heath Grammar School, Skircoat, 1585.

(likely the Earl of Shrewsbury), but Farrer did not found the school.³⁹ The governors were given the authority to acquire land for the school, to the value of £40 a year, but do not seem to have been able to carry this out, or to even begin to establish the school. The governors of Heath School essentially had nothing to govern, and therefore, no school for which to make statutes. Fifteen years elapsed between the granting of the Letters Patent and the election of the first schoolmaster. Within those fifteen years, the progress of the foundation was very slow. In 1593, the vicar of Halifax, Dr Favour, set about making sure that the boys of Halifax were properly prepared to attend university. Favour was not originally from Halifax himself, but perhaps, according to one history of the school, saw it as his duty as vicar to see to the education of the local boys.⁴⁰

By 1597, the school had a seal, some land, and subscriptions for building the schoolhouse. Dr Favour ‘consecrated’ the building site, but by 1598, six months after the schoolhouse was meant to be finished, the people of Halifax were still reluctant to subscribe to the building project.⁴¹ It was Dr Favour in Halifax, and one of the governors, Sir John Savile in London, who were in charge of getting the school up and running; it is not clear what Sir John’s motive was in assisting with the foundation of this school, but it is clear that he, as well as the other governors mentioned in the original letters patent, were not actually from Halifax as they were supposed to be; only the vicar was from the town.⁴² Even by 1602, there were more lands in the school’s possession, so they could at least

³⁹ Thomas Cox, *A Popular History of the Grammar School of Queen Elizabeth at Heath, Near Halifax* (Halifax: F. King, 1879), 5, 7.

⁴⁰ Cox, *Heath Grammar School*, 8.

⁴¹ Cox, *Heath Grammar School*, 11.

⁴² Cox, *Heath Grammar School*, 5.

afford to build the schoolhouse, but there was as yet no provision for a master's stipend. Yet a master had been hired in 1600, one Richard Wilkinson, BA, but it is unclear how long he stayed until he was succeeded by Robert Byrron, MA, who taught there until his death in 1629. Subscription from the people of Halifax seems to have paid the master initially, at the very low rate of £3 per year (most schoolmasters earned around £10 per year), until the situation improved financially around 1607. There are a number of unanswered questions concerning the grammar school at Heath, but it does shed light on some themes associated with the running and funding of a grammar school towards the end of the sixteenth century.

First, it illustrates that a school needed an endowment if it was to be established successfully. It could have been possible for Heath to have been a fee-paying school, but the fact that the people of Halifax were so loathe to contribute to the building of the school suggests that the idea of paying fees for their sons' education would not have been well-received. Second, it shows the need for statutes covering all the elements of running a school – Letters Patent would declare who may attend the school, who could be the governors, and how much land the governors could acquire to fund the school, but no more than that. It also shows what an initially unsuccessful founding process looked like.

Above the level of governors, other systems were in place which ensured that schools were running as they should, that the master was licensed, that he was being paid, and, in some cases, that there even *was* a school operating in a particular town in the first place. The Court of Augmentations, established under Edward VI, redirected chantry lands and endowments towards paying for

grammar schools; often this involved allowing the incumbent chantry priest to continue in a new capacity of schoolmaster only, as at Morpeth and Sedburgh, for instance, and re-arranging the administration of the school to something more closely resembling that of a free grammar school. The schools at Chelmsford and Macclesfield were in fact meant to conform to how other 'lately erected' grammar schools had been governed, while Chelmsford still retained its original charitable role of giving money to the local poor out of chantry lands.⁴³ One could read this as an increase in the number of grammar schools in England during the reign of Edward VI, as indeed much of the older historiography has done, and certainly there were instances where the Court of Augmentations assigned money to endow schools where there had not been a school previously. But what is more significant here, is that in some cases these schools were already in existence, but being funded through a chantry endowment and taught by a chantry priest: the Court of Augmentations was creating a more uniform network of schools, established and authorized centrally, from schools which were reliant on outdated forms of endowment. This is very important for our understanding of early modern English approaches to education, just as much as the number of new schools which were being founded.

Once a chantry had been converted into a grammar school, or once a school had been newly established, by the authority of the Chantry Commissioners or the Court of Augmentations, there were similar bodies which were in charge of checking that the schools were operating properly. Visitations of the schools, conducted during the school year, ensured that the master was

⁴³ TNA, Court of Augmentations, Particulars for Grants to Schools etc., E319/3, Morpeth, 1551, E319/6 Sedburgh, 1551, E319/7 Chelmsford, 1551, E319/14 Macclesfield, 1551.

licensed to teach, and that his students were profiting from his instruction; the boys at Blackburn school were specifically asked in the school's statutes to be on their best behaviour around the governors.⁴⁴ Bishops' certificates for each diocese list the payments awarded to the vicars and curates as well as to the schoolmasters; these payments vary, often considerably, between schools, due to the amount of the school's original endowment, or the size of the school and the town in which it was located, but they are all carefully recorded.⁴⁵ Commissions of Enquiry were sent out in Elizabeth's reign, in her name, to schools across the kingdom, inquiring mainly as to the suitability of the schoolmaster, but also whether or not the master was paid, and whether the location of the school was convenient for the boys of the town; these were undertaken at a diocesan level, with the reply sent back by the relevant bishop.⁴⁶ If there were any problems, they were to be dealt with at the local level, by the school governors or local clergy, but the monitoring of the quality of the grammar schools, across England, was undertaken centrally.

Endowing Schools as a Charitable Action

Education had not always been a significant element in charitable bequests by well-off individuals. Feeding the poor, contributing to hospitals and almshouses, founding chantries: that was the kind of charitable activity which was

⁴⁴ "Blackburn School statutes, 1600", in Garstang, *History of the Blackburn Grammar School*, 161.

⁴⁵ TNA, E178/3254, Bishop's certificates for schools in Peterborough diocese, 1569-74.

⁴⁶ TNA, Commissions of Enquiry, 1569-70, for Whalley (Lancs.), Kendall, Burghe, and Appleby (Westmorland), E178/492-493. These schools, incidentally, did not appear to be causing the government any trouble.

commonly undertaken prior to the sixteenth century. Even by the early sixteenth century, 'schools still competed for attention with many other charitable causes...endowing a school was a more original and unusual benefaction than founding a chantry or feeding the poor'.⁴⁷ Schools were cheaper to found than hospitals, but not always easier to establish, in large part because there might be competition in a particular area over the master's teaching rights there. Despite the increasing lay interest in education, and the resulting schools which owed their existence to individual benefactors, schools continued to play a fairly moderate part in charitable activity as a whole. There were, in addition, not many different kinds of educational establishments to endow or to which one could leave money or land. An elementary, or 'petty' school, which taught young children to read in the vernacular, was a more ephemeral type of institution and did not tend to be established through a formal endowment. A university college would be a more expensive undertaking. A song school might be an option prior to the 1540s, but apart from these three, the type of educational institution which an individual or a community would be most likely to formally found was a grammar school, but a charitable motivation behind such a foundation was not always obvious.

Charitable aims did persist throughout the sixteenth century, however, as numerous bequests for school foundations included some sort of provision for the poor, or included financial support for poorer students. At Archbishop Holgate's school in York, any surplus rents from the school's lands were to go to the mending of highways and to the poor of the city.⁴⁸ Holgate's three free schools

⁴⁷ Orme, *Education in the West of England*, 175.

⁴⁸ Borthwick, Bp. Sch. 53, 7-8, Holgate's School foundation charter.

were part of a larger charitable aim, as, in addition to establishing three grammar schools, at York, where he was Archbishop, Old Malton, where he had been head of the Gilbertine Priory, and Hemsworth, the archbishop also left lands in his will to found at least one, known, hospital in Hemsworth, near his place of birth. Holgate, as a wealthy cleric, also financially assisted the schools at East Retford and Sedburgh, and may have been involved in the re-foundation of Pocklington School.⁴⁹ The free school at Halsham was housed in the same building as the local almshouse, and its founders, Sir John Constable and his wife, left money for the maintenance of both institutions. £10 a year was left to send one ‘poor scholar’ from the Halsham school to Trinity College, Oxford; when he left the school, he was to be replaced by another such poor student.⁵⁰ The grammar school at Guisborough was also founded alongside an almshouse, already discussed, although it was more common to found a school only.

Including an almshouse in the foundation of a school, while not common, was not an entirely unusual setup – during the middle ages there had been close links between hospitals and schools. The priest in a hospital might also act as a schoolmaster, and poor scholars might be housed and fed at a hospital. The ‘almshouse or hospital’ at Guisborough and the hospital at Hemsworth were similar to those founded in the fifteenth century: caring for the long-term infirm, who wore uniforms and were instructed to pray daily, and run according to statutes rather than monastic rules. Sometimes a school might come into existence because a wealthy patron had intended to found a hospital, but found that there

⁴⁹ A.G. Dickens, *Robert Holgate Archbishop of York and President of the King’s Council in the North* (London: St Anthony’s Press, St Anthony’s Hall publications, No. 8, 1955), 23.

⁵⁰ Borthwick, Bp. Sch. 23, 1, endowment of Halsham Free School.

was not enough money to do so; this was the case with Winchcombe school in 1519.

Was endowing a school a charitable action? If the school was for poor students, or if there were any ‘exhibitions’, or boys sent from the grammar school to university with their education paid for, then yes. This was a continuation of older practices. A number of grammar schools were founded alongside almshouses, as we have already seen, or a bequest for a school might include poor relief, as at Kirkby Stephen in 1566. While these institutions looked after the poor, the boys who were to be taught at the grammar school were not always poor. Often statutes would insist that the students be from the parish or town in which the school was located, rendering a service to the parish community which was charitable in itself regardless of the social background of those students.⁵¹ To enable children to be brought up well and become virtuous through ‘educacion institucon and instrucon’ was also beneficial to English society more widely, and this remained a consistent theme throughout the period. Later in the sixteenth century, as control of education began to shift from the local to a more diocesan level, the charitable aspect of school foundations was joined by a new concern with uniformity, of upholding the English church, as well as a new sense of grammar schools contributing to the good of the commonwealth with their humanist training in rhetoric and good citizenship, educating future figures of authority.

In the preamble to the statutes for his school in York, Archbishop Holgate spoke of Henry VIII’s ‘most godly zeale and affection towarde the increase of

⁵¹ Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England c. 1400-c. 1580*, 2nd ed. (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2005), 368.

learnynge and bryngynge uppe of youth in vertuous exercyse in this his great realme of England'.⁵² Bringing up its youngest, most impressionable, members well was vital to the well-being of the kingdom at large, as well as of the church, of both of which Henry was the head. The king himself gave Holgate a licence by letters patent to found three Yorkshire schools, just as the king's children would do for so many newly-founded and re-founded grammar schools. A royal interest in schools may reflect a desire for religious uniformity, from the standard Lily's Grammar issued by Henry VIII to Edward VI's and Elizabeth I's letters patent for the grammar schools discussed here. Nicholas Orme speaks of a 'new sense of vigilance about defending the church', which led to the stress on uniformity in religion, and by extension, in education.⁵³ There is an increasing sense that education was taking on a new role in developing both the church and commonwealth, and in creating on a national scale, through local schools, a network of similarly educated boys prepared for both religious and secular service. If it is the case, though, that one of the key ways of improving England's image as a well-run Protestant kingdom was through education, it is interesting that so much effort should be expended only on grammar schools (and university colleges), and not on any other type of school. Granted, the boys who were going through the grammar schools were the ones who would be filling the places in the clergy, or in state administration, in government and law-enforcement, and in teaching grammar to the next generation of boys. But the education provided at the grammar schools was only available to about a third to a quarter, at most, of

⁵² Borthwick, Bp. Sch. 53, 1, Holgate's School foundation charter.

⁵³ Orme, *Medieval Schools*, 291, 293.

the young people of England – in promoting institutions which were coming to uphold the English church, the state and the church were really only targeting a small section of the population. Yet grammar schools were, after the middle of the sixteenth century, tightly regulated and monitored by the church in a uniform way which had not been seen before.

Elementary, or vernacular education was operating on a more ephemeral level, often established through charitable means, aimed at the poor (at those children who might not go on to attend the grammar schools), and sometimes not even requiring an actual school or teacher, since most basic instruction in reading and counting could be learned at home. While a teacher of vernacular reading might have to be licensed to do so, elementary education was not officially monitored to the same level as grammar schools. This parallels the more informal, almost ‘vocational’ strand of education, and the formal academic, humanist, strand which appears when we set the grammar schools and their curriculum into the wider context of educational opportunity in this period, a division which is discussed further in the final chapter.

The old view of the sixteenth century as a flourishing era of new school foundations, and of education beginning in earnest at the Reformation, is clearly outdated. The idea of the ‘educational revolution’, of more literacy and more schools, while it cannot be completely demolished, also needs some modification. As early as the fifteenth century, grammar schools were increasingly being seen as a ‘group’, as institutions in society which could be used for its improvement and which in the sixteenth century were becoming increasingly uniform in their

purpose and form. Their role and value in training figures of authority and strengthening the church was becoming more recognized on a wider scale, but was not being radically changed in form. This is hardly as dramatic a change as an educational ‘revolution’. ‘The major change initiated at the Reformation [was] the evolution of a system of schools administered locally by lay governing bodies under the general supervision of the state’ – the ‘haphazard’, localized foundation-methods of the later middle ages had come under a more centralized control, with authority stemming from the state and exercised and enforced locally by officials within the church.⁵⁴ This is a fairly accurate way to describe the developments in educational provision in the sixteenth century – in England, at least. Elsewhere, there was more of a ‘system’: in Scotland after 1560, the church was commissioning visitations of schools, and by the early seventeenth century, the Scottish Kirk as well as Parliament were ensuring that landowners subsidized the building of schools, and were making sure that parents sent their children to these schools and paid the fees. It was not an entirely uniform system, but it was more so than England, where schools were largely founded on private initiative or local petition and administered locally, with only the licensing of schoolmasters and visitations coming from the central authority.⁵⁵ In Europe too, Lutheran reformers outlined a system of education, all the elements of which were to be tightly regulated, so that ‘teaching and learning became institutionalized activities’.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ Simon, *Education and Society in Tudor England*, 291.

⁵⁵ Julian Goodare, *State and Society in Early Modern Scotland* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 207; Green, *Humanism and Protestantism*, 269-70.

⁵⁶ Strauss, *Luther's House of Learning*, 3-13, 24.

Nonetheless, there was an observable shift in England from a localized collection of endowed schools, chantry schools, monastic schools, almonry and collegiate church schools, all providing grammar education early in the sixteenth century, towards a network of endowed grammar schools, Henry VIII's new cathedral schools, and the colleges like Eton and Winchester providing this education one hundred years later. Nicholas Orme describes educational change from the middle ages into the sixteenth century as 'evolutionary not revolutionary', arguing that grammar school education remained 'the same thing in different circumstances', and in this I would agree; this argument seems also to apply to the later sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries as well.⁵⁷ The sixteenth century adapted a model of education that had worked in the fifteenth century and made it into something that worked under post-Reformation circumstances too, removing, replacing, re-founding, and gradually creating, if not an actual 'system' of education, then at least a more uniform network of grammar schools under some measure of government and ecclesiastical control, and designed to uphold the new church settlement. Among the most important elements in this network was the schoolmaster, the subject of the following chapter.

⁵⁷ Orme, *Medieval Schools*, 288, 3.

CHAPTER 3

THE SCHOOLMASTER

The chapter examines the person of the schoolmaster, his career, qualifications, and reputation in society. The career of a schoolmaster will be discussed first, by determining where in his life his teaching career fell, how this was related to a clerical career, and whether or not he was allowed to be married. The schoolmaster's religious views and religious duties follow, the former becoming more strictly regulated and the latter becoming more simplified as the century progressed and the religious settlement became more definitively laid out. This is related to his role as teacher of good morals and as an example to his students, as well as to his teaching methods. Finally, English schoolmasters will be compared to those on the European continent at this time, to understand how the figure of the schoolmaster appeared in other confessional contexts. English schoolmasters began to take on a more 'public' role than they had occupied early in the sixteenth century, becoming more than teachers of grammar and moral exemplars, but also upholders of the official Protestant settlement. As schools were founded and re-founded to help eradicate religious ignorance and encourage religious uniformity within the kingdom, schoolmasters played an increasingly important role in this, which also affected who could become a schoolmaster and what his qualifications were required to be.

Schoolmastering as a Career?

Looking at the careers of schoolmasters during the sixteenth century will illustrate how the career of a schoolmaster was viewed in the period, and indeed whether it was a career for life, or whether it was one stop on one's way to a position in the church. We cannot speak of a teaching 'profession' in this period, as there was no standard method of recruitment or training, besides the required religious oath after 1559. Was teaching a profession, or an occupation? As the individual situations of schoolmasters varied so greatly as to their level of education, rate of pay, and the reputation of the school at which they taught, there was little sense of professional 'solidarity' among them.¹ We can describe schoolmastering as a career, however, or as a long phrase of one's career.² When a schoolmaster got married, and if he was married at all, is one element to be considered; whether he held clerical livings while teaching, or after, and where teaching fell within his lifetime are further aspects to be examined.

The Oxford Dictionary of National Biography contains entries for nearly sixty schoolmasters who taught between the late fifteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Many of these men are classified by the *ODNB* as schoolmasters, or perhaps as schoolmaster and something else. Many schoolmasters are simply names recorded in commissioners' reports, or in lists of payments made to clergy and schoolmasters, but some will have gained an entry in the Dictionary because of their later careers, or because they were published authors. These individual

¹ Cressy, "A Drudgery of Schoolmasters", 129.

² Green, *Humanism and Protestantism*, 91-92.

biographies are an excellent starting-point for better understanding schoolmasters and their careers, and taking several dozen such biographies as a body is a hitherto little-used approach to the subject. These schoolmasters will serve as case studies, of a sort, and read in a roughly chronological order may give us a clearer picture of what the career of a schoolmaster would look like and where it would sit within his life, and how this changed over the course of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Was being a schoolmaster the end goal for a man just out of university? Or was it a step towards something else, such as a living or other clerical position?

Of the schoolmasters who were born around, or prior to, 1500 (fourteen out of our sample of sixty) many wrote and published works on grammar and other humanist subjects. It must be kept in mind, of course, that many of these men are well-known to us, famous schoolmaster-grammarians such as William Lily and John Stanbridge, and are thus not necessarily going to give a representative picture of the typical schoolmaster's career. All attended university, with degrees in grammar, arts, or theology, and most proceeded to the MA; Robert Whittington and Leonard Cox are the two more unusual cases, the former becoming a 'rhetorician' by writing verses rather than through study, the latter attending university in central Europe. Two general patterns emerge among these men, who did much of their teaching before the Reformation: that of holding clerical positions alongside a lifelong teaching career, or that of teaching for most of his life, but eventually leaving that career for a clerical one. For most of these masters, then, teaching was a lifelong career, but it seems, from the number who left it later in life, to have been less desirable a career than that of a beneficed

cleric. John Stanbridge became master of Magdalen College School, but ended life as the rector of Winwick, Northamptonshire; John Palsgrave began his career in teaching, but became a priest and finally a royal chaplain – for him, entering the clergy was the end goal. The number of unmarried, as opposed to married, schoolmasters in this sample is not large (the numbers are roughly equal), and of our sample of schoolmasters born near the beginning of the sixteenth century, only a few were ordained priests. Many of the men who worked their way up, from under-master to master to provost, acquiring livings along the way (William Horman, for instance), or who proceeded from master to rector to royal tutor (such as John Holt), were not married, although this is not always the case, as John Rightwise's career followed this path, but he *was* married. Teaching might be one step in a career for a single man, ordained priest, but for a married man it might more likely be a lifelong career. Early in this period, laymen might teach as a long-term career, preferring teaching to the priesthood as it allowed them the option of marrying, while schoolmasters who were clerics would aim for a patron to grant them a living, on which role they would then focus instead of teaching (although John Holt did both).³

Those masters who were active in the middle of the century, such as Nicholas Udall and Edmund Coote, tended to remain schoolmasters for life. They also held more clerical livings (sometimes simultaneously), and left teaching late in life to become beneficed clerics. This pattern occurs early in the century also, but becomes more pronounced by mid-century. About half of these men were married, and most were writing, some on grammar but some on teaching English,

³ Orme, *Education in Early Tudor England: Magdalen College Oxford and its School, 1480-1540* (Oxford: Magdalen College, 1998), 1.

religion, verse, and rhetoric; some wrote plays to be performed by their students; an aspiring author or poet could be a schoolmaster if his chosen career was failing.⁴ As with the earlier group of masters, above, these men were also university-educated (though in some cases their educational qualifications are unknown), with some taking degrees in law rather than grammar. Schoolmasters at this point began to play other roles in their lives, either before or after teaching, a development which is not commonly appreciated, but which becomes apparent when comparing schoolmasters' biographies over time: Richard Mulcaster was MP for Carlisle (his home town) before becoming headmaster of Merchant Taylors' School in 1561, John Bond was MP for Taunton (where he had been schoolmaster) in 1601, John Twyne was a mayor and MP for Canterbury, Hugh Lloyd was chancellor of Rochester before becoming a schoolmaster, and Christopher Johnson practised medicine while headmaster of Winchester, becoming a fellow of the Royal College of Physicians; all five schoolmasters were married. At this point in time, teaching might take up most of one's career, but with clerical livings being the preferred end goal.

By the end of the sixteenth century and the beginning of the seventeenth, we start to see schoolmasters taking on more public roles in society, with an influence in society beyond the walls of their school. Are we seeing the humanist civic ideal of service to one's commonwealth finally being fulfilled here? During the second half of the century we see these schoolmasters as having wider interests, public or clerical roles to play, and, often, they were married. Their children are mentioned more and more frequently as the century progresses, often

⁴ Green, *Humanism and Protestantism*, 96.

as attending grammar schools and universities themselves, or in some cases succeeding their fathers as schoolmasters, perhaps having been usher under them first.⁵ They were educated in a similar fashion to their earlier counterparts, many taking MAs, and this is reflected in their eventual careers. They are no longer categorized as ‘schoolmaster and grammarian’, as was common for the early period, but are ‘writers’ in a more general sense, writing on religion, spelling, English, reading, and a wider range of subjects than before; some even practised medicine alongside their teaching, often taking a degree in the subject; examples of these schoolmaster-physicians include John Bond at Taunton between 1579 and 1601, Christopher Johnson while Headmaster of Winchester in the 1560s, and Richard Argentine, who may have tutored and practised medicine in a gentry household in the mid sixteenth century after being usher at Ipswich School. The earlier masters seem to have been more self-consciously trying to make humanist teaching methods work in their schools, and later we see that they *did* work, as later schoolmasters acted on, and were shaped by, those methods which they had learned in school themselves.

These later schoolmasters were more often married than not, and the predominant pattern seems to be that of schoolmaster and cleric for life. Only one of our examples, the pluralist rector and master of Magdalen College School, William Symonds, gave up teaching in favour of a rectory. Thomas Ashton of Shrewsbury School entered the service of the Earl of Essex after retiring from the headmastership in 1571, but he tutored the Earl’s son, so he was still in a teaching position, albeit probably a more lucrative one than previously. There are no more

⁵ John Dawes and his son at Ipswich in 1580, and Alexander Gil and his son at St Paul’s in the early seventeenth century, for example.

instances among our examples of schoolmasters holding public offices, just the role of schoolmaster and perhaps a clerical position, usually that of a vicar or rector. Teaching by the end of the century had become a lifelong career, held alongside a clerical post, perhaps, and no longer just a stop on the way to a more desirable career.

Later Tudor schoolmasters are increasingly remembered, fondly or otherwise, by their students, but perhaps this is not a reliable indicator of their reputations, as this may only be due to more extant sources from the later period in which former schoolboys remember their old masters. Many of the masters listed in the *ODNB* were from leading schools such as Eton, St Paul's and Winchester, but not all; many are listed as being the master at smaller, lesser-known schools. This fortunately allows the evidence from the *ODNB* not to be too biased in favour of larger and more well-off schools. From an official point of view, schoolmasters were important in the latter part of the century for the role they played in maintaining the official religious settlement and in moulding productive members of society; they might also be recognized as authors and scholars in their own right, not only as teachers of grammar. This was an improvement on the views of schoolmasters which had prevailed in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, when this occupation had not been held in high regard, but the general reputation of schoolmasters in the later Tudor and early Stuart periods still did not match the importance attached to their role by the church and the state, as we will see later.⁶

⁶ Orme, *Medieval Schools*, 184-86.

Priest or Layman? Married or Unmarried?

Whether or not the master should be married, unmarried, a layman, or in orders, is certainly a question to be considered when assessing the changing role of education and learning in English society during this period. Unfortunately there are very few mentions of the schoolmaster's marital status among the schools discussed here: the statutes of Archbishop Holgate's school say that the master's wife could not live within the cathedral close, and the masters of Ruthin and Guisborough were required to be single men.⁷ Often it is implied, if the statutes do not necessarily say so directly, that the schoolmaster should be a single man, or he might be referred to as a priest throughout the statutes, as at Skipton and Northwich. He might be given a house, usually above the schoolroom itself, as at Halifax. The implication of giving the schoolmaster a house above the schoolroom is that this would be enough space for one man to live in, but too small to house his wife and children as well. When John Anwykyll taught at Magdalen College School at the end of the fifteenth century, he was given a place to live in the college, for his wife and family, and John Meighen at Shrewsbury was married but seems to have lived in a house at the school, but most of the schools discussed here do not mention the family of a married master as being able to live above the schoolroom.⁸ Statutes discuss the 'religion, learning and life' of the master, and some, such as Wakefield, go into detail about his religion,

⁷ Borthwick, Bp. Sch. 53, 8, Holgate's School foundation charter; Borthwick, Bp. Sch. 18, Guisborough School foundation charter; "Ruthin school rules", in Sylvester, *Educational Documents*, 110.

⁸ Orme, 'Anwykyll, John (d. 1487)', *ODNB*, accessed 18 Nov 2011; TNA, PROB 11/172/228, will of John Meighen, 1636.

but most of the sources discussed here do not mention whether the master could be married or not. Of our nearly sixty Tudor schoolmasters with an entry in the *ODNB* over half were married, particularly, though not exclusively, those teaching later in the century, with the number of married schoolmasters greater than those for whom no information on their marital status survives. This information is presented in Appendix 2 in scatter-graph form.

A sample of ten schoolmasters' wills held in the National Archives can reveal a good deal about a schoolmaster's social, financial, and marital status. Despite being such valuable sources of information, they have not yet been widely utilised in studies of schoolmasters and their careers. They are also *not* always from the same schoolmasters found in the *ODNB*, giving us a larger number of examples upon which to draw. These wills are also, in many cases, illustrative of the kinds of books owned by schoolmasters, although that will be discussed later in this chapter. Of these ten wills, composed between 1549 and 1636, nine mention the schoolmaster's wife, and seven, his children. Most of the schoolmasters were able to leave a house, and in a few cases even land (though with little indication of the value of this land), to their wife or eldest child; Richard Brodway of Chelmsford even had servants to whom he left an unspecified amount of money in 1608. Brodway's will is also the only one to mention debts, although two others, John King of Ipswich (1616) and John Greenwood of Burntwood, Essex (1609) were owed money, to the value of £50 and £100, respectively. In the case of those wills which mention the master's children, those children were left with money, with sums ranging from £10 to £50; John Baker of Shrewsbury in 1608 was even leaving money to other relatives

besides his children. John Meighen of Shrewsbury also left all of his books and papers to his eldest son in 1636, although the titles of these books are not listed.

This sample of wills is quite a small one, and they date mostly from the 1580s or later, but the general impression given by this particular sample is that these ten schoolmasters were in a position either to provide for their surviving families in a fairly modest manner, or to leave books and other goods to the school at which they had taught, such as all the books, ‘deske and stained [cloths] with the bedsted and tester now standinge in my studie’ bequeathed to Bury St Edmunds School by Thomas Rudd in 1573. The books which a schoolmaster might bequeath to his school will be discussed in more detail later on in this chapter, but some of the other items Rudd bequeaths in his will are of particular note here: a set of ‘wooden dials’ are left along with some handkerchiefs to a friend, while Rudd left a silver spoon to his usher at Bury St Edmunds, Thomas Cranewise, who was also a witness to Rudd’s will. A further six silver spoons were left to Rudd’s mother back in Cumbria.⁹

To return to the subject of whether schoolmasters were married or ordained, this changed over time, but might also have changed according to where in the country the master was teaching, and whether school founders were willing

⁹ TNA, PROB11/71/123, Will of Thomas Bradshawe, late schoolmaster of the Queen’s Grammar School Worcester, 1587; TNA, PROB11/111/26, Will of John Baker, gentleman and second schoolmaster of the Free Grammar School of Shrewsbury, 1608; TNA, PROB11/114/239, Will of Lewys ap Jenkyn, schoolmaster of St Sepulchre’s London, 1609; TNA, PROB11/127/5, Will of John King, schoolmaster of Ipswich, 1616; TNA, PROB11/55/447, Will of Thomas Rudd, master of Bury St Edmund’s, 1573; TNA, PROB11/32/595, Will of Richard Jones, gentleman, master of St Paul’s in London, 1549; TNA, PROB11/172/228, Will of John Meighen, master of Shrewsbury, 1636; TNA, PROB11/162/164, Will of John Woodhouse, master of Chichester, 1632; TNA, PROB11/114/366, Will of John Greenwood, master of Burntwood, Essex, 1609; TNA, PROB11/111/274, Will of Richard Brodwaye or Brodway, MA and schoolmaster of the Free Grammar School of Chelmsford, 1608.

to appoint married or ordained masters. The schoolmaster at Guisborough was required to be ‘a priest in order’, and, in addition, unmarried; even the substitute he was required to find for his absences was to be unmarried. This was 1561, however, when the clergy were allowed to marry, but this was not the case for the Guisborough schoolmaster. The founder of this school, Robert Pursglove, was a former Augustinian canon; he had been head of Guisborough priory until its dissolution in 1539. The fact that he forbade the master to be married may be indicative of his conservative religious nature, but it also raises questions of how far the Reformation had taken hold in the north by the 1560s. Eamon Duffy attests to the continuance of traditional Catholic practices in more remote areas of England, like the north, well past the middle of the century, and Christopher Haigh similarly questions how far Protestant doctrine was actually taught and absorbed in many parts of England. In the minds of many ordinary people, the old faith was either going to be restored, or had never been permanently abolished, and Haigh describes the Church of England as ‘a Protestant church with many Catholic churches’, with clerics who had been ordained before 1559 still ministering in the traditional way.¹⁰ Clerical marriage was not fully accepted even well into Elizabeth’s reign, with ordinary parishioners complaining that ‘it was never a good world since ministers must have wives’.¹¹ This was the context for Pursglove’s school foundation with its unmarried master. Pursglove himself may have been somewhat more exceptional by the 1560s in requiring single schoolmasters, but his decision does reflect a wider trend of traditional Catholic

¹⁰ Christopher Haigh, “The Church of England, the Catholics and the People”, in Marshall, ed., *The Impact of the English Reformation*, 237.

¹¹ Haigh, “The Church of England, the Catholics and the People”, 251.

religious practice and teaching continuing into the Elizabethan period, a trend which properly licensed schoolmasters and clergy were entrusted to reverse. The founder of Ruthin school in 1574, Gabriel Goodman, Dean of Westminster, also required the schoolmaster and usher at his school to be ‘single and unmarried’.¹²

The schools at Tadcaster (1596) and Ilkley (1607) both included the vicar of their respective churches as an option when choosing the master. The Tadcaster schoolmaster could not have any clerical benefices, unless the vicar was chosen, in which case it seems he could carry on being the vicar, and the vicar of Ilkley church was the first choice for the master of that school, if he was thought ‘fytte and capable of the said place’; the manicule in the margin of the statutes near this point indicates its importance.¹³ The statutes of Tadcaster and Wakefield state that the master should not hold any clerical positions, and that if he did he was to choose those church commitments over his teaching duties.¹⁴ This could be another reason why some schools stipulate that their masters remain unmarried – the responsibility of maintaining a wife and family might take his time and effort away from teaching, and might mean he would need to be paid more, just as holding a position within the clergy would take a schoolmaster’s attention away from teaching. But in practice, schoolmasters in the later sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries do seem to have held clerical or even civic positions, sometimes more than one, in addition to their post of schoolmaster. As we have seen they were starting to become both schoolmasters and clergymen, perhaps

¹² “Ruthin School Rules”, in Sylvester, *Educational Documents*, 111.

¹³ Borthwick, Bp. Sch. 45, 1, Tadcaster School statutes; Borthwick, Bp. Sch. 30, 1, documents relating to Ilkley School, 1607.

¹⁴ Borthwick, Bp. Sch. 45, 1, Tadcaster school statutes; Borthwick, Bp. Sch. 46, copy of Elizabeth I’s foundation charter and statutes for Wakefield Grammar School, 1591.

married, and sometimes with other occupations or offices to fulfill, taking on a broader range of roles than the grammarian-schoolmasters at the beginning of the sixteenth century.

The Usher

One stage on the road to becoming a beneficed clergyman (or a schoolmaster) might involve being an usher, or assistant master. The usher in most grammar schools was a young man straight from university, and not old enough to be ordained. Perhaps he might not even be old enough to be a schoolmaster, as it was common for masters to be above a certain age: at Rivington this was twenty-four years old, at Northwich, thirty (in order that he be a better example to his students).¹⁵ Being an usher paid very little; payments varied considerably between schools, ranging from a fraction of the master's wage, to roughly half of the master's payment: the ushers at Archbishop Holgate's school in York and Kirkby Stephen in Yorkshire, for instance, were paid about £2 per year compared to the master's £12, while the usher at Hawkshead received £8, less than half of the £20 paid to the master. The King's School, Canterbury, and St Paul's in London paid the usher roughly half of what was paid to the master.¹⁶ The usher would often have taught more boys than the master (those who were just beginning their

¹⁵ Lancashire RO, DDX94/177, 187, statutes and charter of Rivington School; Marjorie Cox, *A History of Sir John Deane's School Northwich* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1975), 35.

¹⁶ Borthwick, Bp. Sch. 53, Holgate's School foundation charter; Borthwick, Bp. Sch. 25, Hawkshead School foundation charter; Borthwick, Bp. Sch. 33, letter patent for Kirkby Stephen Grammar School, 1565 and 1573, 18th-c. copies; "The Re-foundation of Canterbury Cathedral and Grammar School, 1541" in Leach, *Educational Charters and Documents*, 463; "St Paul's School statutes" in Carlisle, *Concise Description*, II, 72-73.

course of study, before the less-capable students had been weeded out), although the statutes for Wakefield school acknowledge the difficulty of instilling the basics of grammar, especially to so many boys, and state that the usher should teach no more than half of the students in the school.¹⁷ In regards to ‘weeding out’ the less able students, in some cases they could lose their place in the school largely due to poor behavior, as at Guildford School and Holgate’s School, York, where any student who would ‘not be orderyd’ was to be removed; sometimes, however, school rules and statutes specifically state that failure to learn was a sufficient reason to remove a boy from the school. At Ruthin, parents could take their son out of school after one year if he was ‘unapt to learn’, and at Giggleswick, if a boy was ‘altogether negligent or incapable of learning’, he would be ‘returned to his friends to be brought up in some other honest trade and exercise of Life’, at the schoolmaster’s discretion. The school at Rolleston, mentioned above, had a similar approach to boys who were not suited to learning grammar: they would learn to read and write, but not stay on in the school for further instruction.¹⁸

While some of the less academically-inclined students might eventually leave the school, the usher’s job was still a difficult one, since it also laid the foundations in grammar which the boys required in order to progress under the master’s instruction. The usher might have to teach the basic elements of Latin grammar, or even reading in English, if that job was not given to one of the older

¹⁷ Borthwick, Bp. Sch. 46, Wakefield foundation charter and statutes.

¹⁸ Surrey History Centre, Woking, BR/OC/7/1, Guildford School statutes, 1608; Borthwick, Bp. Sch. 53, Holgate’s School foundation charter; “Ruthin School rules”, in Sylvester, ed., *Educational Documents*, 115; Borthwick, Bp. Sch. 17, 2, Giggleswick School statutes, 1592, 18th-century copy; Schulz, “The Teaching of Handwriting”, 393-4.

students; sometimes the usher took on the teaching of extra subjects such as writing, as he did for a 4d fee at St Bee's school.¹⁹ It was not the most desirable job, and although some school ushers, like John Stanbridge and John Rightwise, did move up to become masters themselves, and though some schools, like Archbishop Holgate's in York, required that the usher be the first choice to succeed the master, often an usher tried to get out of teaching as soon as he could, leaving when he was ordained and had an income from a cure. It was not generally meant to be one's entire career. It was very rare for a man to remain as an usher for a long time (William Camden was second master at Westminster for eighteen years before becoming headmaster, which is not usual, while John Lawson's example of the usher at Hull Grammar School, Lawrence Scailes, who held that post for forty years, is very exceptional): he was either promoted to be master, or he left, to a position in the church, or perhaps to be the master at another school.²⁰

Once a potential schoolmaster had graduated from university, his first appointment might be to teach in his former college; this might mean that he received testimonials as to his teaching ability from the college fellows, and his future students at other schools might then be sent to that college. From there, he could either stay on as a college fellow, or go on to a different grammar school, but many worked in their home county, and perhaps at their old school – Shrewsbury School actually preferred local men or former students as master. Good relations with the local authorities were important, as the numbers of

¹⁹ Cressy, "A Drudgery of Schoolmasters", 145.

²⁰ Green, *Humanism and Protestantism*, 90; John Lawson, *The Endowed Grammar Schools of East Yorkshire* (York: East Yorkshire Local History Society, 1962), 19.

students depended in part upon local opinion of the schoolmaster, who was sometimes recommended by locals to the governors; this way they knew he would be a good candidate. An interested schoolmaster, or someone acting on his behalf, might petition those in charge of naming the schoolmaster, as at Ludlow in the early seventeenth century, where one John Blakeway petitioned the bailiffs and aldermen (the equivalent to governors at Ludlow) for the post of schoolmaster, stressing, albeit in very general terms, that he was ‘a man in degree equal to any that have been in that place many yeares past’ for his ‘industry and paines in the same place’, since he had heard that the current schoolmaster would soon be leaving. One Thomas Cornwalle also wrote on Blakeway’s behalf, stating that Blakeway was an MA, and ‘honest man’ and a ‘good teacher’.²¹ The Winchester College archives contain several letters, which I have not yet seen discussed elsewhere, recommending potential schoolmasters to the college: William Burghley wrote to Winchester College in 1596 to recommend Benjamin Heydon to succeed the current schoolmaster, as, it seems, did other (unknown) individuals, emphasizing Heydon’s excellent standing as a Master of Arts, his ‘sobriety’ and ‘moderation’, and the fact that he was ‘single, and not incombred with anie other chardge which might draw him awaie from those due paines, and cares which a maistre in that rome ought to take’; other petitions to the college on behalf of potentially suitable candidates are extant from the later sixteenth century, but Heydon’s (successful) appointment is particularly well-documented.²²

²¹ Shropshire RO, 1B7/1-4, applications for the post of schoolmaster, Ludlow Grammar School, early 17th c.

²² Winchester College Archives, 23448, William Burghley to warden and fellows, recommending a potential new master, 1596; Winchester College Archives, 23446, Archbishop of Canterbury to warden and fellows, 1596.

In some cases, the school governors might try to get one of their relatives in as master, whether or not he actually had a degree: this may simply tell us that these relatives needed a job, and the governors could find them one at the school, but it also reveals that having the authority to choose the schoolmaster was very desirable. For example, the chancellor of Wells cathedral had always had the power to choose the schoolmaster, as long as there had been a grammar school in the cathedral close; sometime in the late 1540s the chancellor chose a potential schoolmaster, once the post had become vacant, but the dean and chapter of Wells cathedral proposed someone else (who was actually chosen as master), ‘intending to defraud the said [chancellor] of patronage of the said skole [sic]’. Despite the fact that the dean and chapter then dismissed this story as complete nonsense and did not take any further action on the matter, it illustrates the fact that the ability to choose the master of a school could be taken very seriously, as a form of patronage that those who held this power were keen to exercise.²³

Choosing an usher was often a much more informal affair: while a schoolmaster would be nominated and chosen by school governors, or members of a particular university college, or by the local bishop, and the quality of his teaching and the orthodoxy of his religion was strictly held to account, the usher, if the school had one, might simply be chosen by the schoolmaster, and might even be just an older student. This was not always the case, of course; the governors of Rivington School in 1606 required the assent of the Bishop of Chester in order to pick the new usher, for example, but because not every school, depending on its size and wealth, needed or could afford to pay an usher, his

²³ TNA, CI/1192/7-8, Ailmer v. The Dean and Chapter of Wells re: mastership of the grammar school of Wells, 1544-1551.

appointment was not approached with the same degree of formality as that of the schoolmaster.²⁴

An usher was typically expected to hold a BA degree, while it was very common for schoolmasters to have MAs, and even higher degrees such as Doctor of Theology. Some very small schools in remote areas or with low wages could not attract suitably qualified candidates, whether master or usher. It became more and more common for ushers to have BAs, but smaller schools might get an older student, or a university student who could not yet graduate, to be the usher; the practice of asking an older student to fill this role was actually specified at some schools, such as Kirkby Stephen in 1566 and St Bee's in 1583, as the prescribed method of teaching the lower forms; often he was a poor boy and paying him to be the usher was a charitable action.²⁵

Most schoolmasters would have gone to university between about fourteen and sixteen years of age, completed a degree, and then had to wait until their mid-twenties to be old enough for ordination. They might fill this time by being an usher. If they did not, after receiving ordination, then go on to receive a cure or benefice, they might stay on as a schoolmaster, though perhaps actually still wanting, ideally, to work as a clergyman. This was particularly the case during the early seventeenth century, when an excess of graduates for positions within the clergy led to some men becoming schoolmasters instead, or at least until a church vacancy became available.²⁶ School statutes will either not say anything on this

²⁴ Lancashire RO, DDX94/163, miscellaneous documents relating to Rivington and Blackrod schools, 1560-19th c.

²⁵ Green, *Humanism and Protestantism*, 86; "St Bee's School statutes, 1583" in Carlisle, *Concise Description*, I, 157.

²⁶ Mark H. Curtis, "The Alienated Intellectuals of Early Stuart England", *Past and Present*, 23 (November 1962), 34.

subject, or they will insist the master be in orders, or they will insist that he not be, or they will say that he can be in orders, but he must devote his time to teaching and not to his clerical duties (so often he could not have a cure). These varying approaches do not necessarily correspond to any change over time, but by the seventeenth century the trend was to remain an usher for longer, and to then act as both schoolmaster and cleric, a pattern seen among the late-sixteenth century schoolmasters discussed above. This may have been because teaching was seen as a worthy end, or because it could supplement one's clerical income.²⁷ A career in the church, or in law or medicine (the three 'traditional' professions) was much more desirable than that of teaching, because of the greater social standing and financial reward which accompanied it. However, for an educated man who was not prepared to join the clergy and subscribe to the Thirty-Nine Articles and the Royal Supremacy, becoming a schoolmaster might be an ideal way to avoid that commitment.

This is certainly not to say that being a schoolmaster did not involve being tested for religious suitability; we will see shortly that it did. Even receiving a university degree after 1581 involved taking an oath accepting the Royal Supremacy, and many, or most, schools, required their schoolmasters to have degrees. But in practice, the monitoring of schoolmasters' religious orthodoxy was not as stringent as it was in other parts of Europe. The 1559 requirement for schoolmasters to be licensed was apparently not always followed through in practice, and while school visitations were certainly concerned with whether or not the master was teaching any unorthodox doctrine, since they were 'limited to

²⁷ Green, *Humanism and Protestantism*, 87-8, 90-1.

asking whether the teacher used an officially approved catechism...and the official Latin grammar', the emphasis was more about the books from which the schoolmaster was teaching, and less about determining his own religious views.²⁸

Religious Views

It was of great importance that a schoolmaster maintain orthodox religious views, particularly after the 1550s, and it was these views which could either secure him a teaching post or have him removed from one. A schoolmaster could not teach either in a school or in a private home without the bishop's assent, having been 'commended by the testimonie of godly men, touching hys life and manners, and especially his religion'.²⁹ In order to earn a degree from either university, one had to accept the royal supremacy and renounce papal authority after 1559. One could be denied one's degree on these grounds. By 1581, this oath, along with the English articles of religion, was required in order to matriculate in any of the colleges, which most schoolmasters still did after that date.³⁰ Schoolmasters were not just 'screened' at their licensing to a particular post, but also upon entering university, obtaining a degree, upon ordination, and at school visitations.³¹ Schoolmaster licences were primarily concerned with religious conformity; 'life and religion' were just as important as his formal

²⁸ Simon, *Education and Society in Tudor England*, 321; Green, *Humanism and Protestantism*, 74.

²⁹ Church of England, *A Booke of Certaine Canons, Concernyng Some Parte of the Discipline of the Church of England In the year of our Lord 1571* (John Day, 1571), 25, EEBO.

³⁰ Grendler, *The Universities of the Italian Renaissance* (Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002), 195.

³¹ Green, *Humanism and Protestantism*, 89.

learning, if not more so (not all schools specified that the master have a degree).³²

Records of licences given survive more commonly than the actual licences themselves, since the licences were kept by the schoolmasters, presumably to be shown during visitations. Grounds for removing a schoolmaster's licence were largely to do with not bringing his students to church as required, failing to subscribe to the royal supremacy, and not using the official catechism or grammar. Visitation records and commissioners' reports also, naturally, make reference to the schoolmaster's knowledge of grammar and the quality of his teaching, as well as whether he was teaching from 'bookes...whereby the fulness and fineness of the Latine and Greeke tounge may be learned, & those especially, which profite to the knowledge of Christ and godlynes'.³³

If the master at Wakefield had 'a popish disposition', he was no longer suitable to continue teaching there, while the usher at Rivington in 1614 was replaced because he had forsaken his 'corporal oath' of 'faith and true allegiance to the king's highness and to his heires and lawful successors'.³⁴ The master's religious persuasion was important because as the religious policy of the kingdom became more defined and enforced, the schoolmaster took on a new role in spreading that faith, even more so as many of his students might go on to enter the clergy, as was taken for granted at Rivington, speaking of its oldest boys 'that are ready to be ministers'.³⁵ Along with the usual requirements to teach the official grammar, bring students to church, and maintain an honest reputation, the articles

³² Cressy, "A Drudgery of Schoolmasters", 139.

³³ Church of England, *A Booke of Certaine Canons*, 26.

³⁴ Borthwick, Bp. Sch. 46, foundation charter and statutes of Wakefield School; Lancashire RO DDX94/163, miscellaneous documents relating to Rivington and Blackrod schools.

³⁵ Baldwin, *Shakspeare's Small Latine*, I, 346-51.

to be enquired of schoolmasters within the diocese of Winchester of 1575

included whether

they suffer theyr schollers to read any bookes tending to the impugnyng and derogation of the order of religion new set forth, or propunde to them any Themes, vulgares, or subtill questions, wherby matters of Religion concluded and established myght be made doubtful unto them, or they induced to deryde or scoffe at any godly order, Ryte or Ceremonie now set forth and allowed.³⁶

The schoolmaster was not just required to provide religious instruction, but also to encourage loyalty to the official church through his teaching, and discourage any dissent from, or questioning of, that church by his students.

The schoolmaster did not actually teach a great deal of religious material directly, or of his own devising: most prayers used in the classroom were prescribed by the founder in the statutes, the catechism studied on Saturday afternoons was a pre-approved, official, text, and the minister, not the schoolmaster, was responsible for the content of the sermon the boys listened to on Sundays. Yet once the Reformation was enacted in England, it was still important that a Catholic, or someone with unconventional religious views, was not in a position to teach peoples' children. As schools were founded and re-founded in the interest of establishing the Protestant faith, especially in conservative areas like the North, as discussed above, the master not only had to prove that he himself was following the correct form of worship, but also that he was willing to ensure that others were doing the same.

³⁶ Church of England, *Articles to be Enquired of within the Diocese of Winchester, in the Metropolitall Visitation of the Most Revered Father in Christ, Matthew by the Providence of God, Archbyshop of Canterbury, Primate of all England, and Metropolitan* (John Day, 1575), sig. Bii r., EEBO.

Religious Duties

The religious responsibilities of the schoolmaster underwent a significant change in the sixteenth century. The instruction they were to provide to their students in the catechism and articles of the faith are addressed in more detail in Chapter Five, but here it is worth discussing what else the schoolmaster was expected to do alongside his teaching duties, because in this area we see a distinct shift in emphasis. If he was running a chantry school, he would be expected to sing masses alongside his teaching duties, although it must be borne in mind that this was only a requirement in the 1530s, though it may have happened as early as the fourteenth century at the initiative of individual chantry priests. Sometimes he might be simply a priest, not a chantry priest. At Sir Thomas Boteler's school in Warrington, Lancashire, founded in 1526, the master was a priest, and he and the chantry priest were to say twenty-seven masses (the 'trental' of St Gregory) at the 'anniversary' held every 27 April for the founder and his ancestors, in which the master, and possibly also the boys, participated.³⁷

At Malpas School, founded 1528, the schoolmaster took on even greater responsibility. Required to be a priest and a university graduate, the Malpas master seems to have spent a great deal of his time, and, apparently, his money, on various annual religious observances. He was expected to say mass in the choir of Malpas church, in a surplice, daily if possible, in addition to helping in the choir

³⁷ The phrase 'and every other priest which shall be chosen schoolmaster', used throughout in reference to future masters, implies that the master would always be a priest, as if this simply was an accepted fact. Cheshire RO, SL382/18/1, Warrington Boteler foundation deed.

every Sunday and holiday; while this school might bear some indication of being a chantry school, the master and the chantry priest were not the same person. The founder, Ranulph Brereton, stipulated that an obit be held for him every Friday after the Exaltation of the Cross (14 September), and on St George's Day. This was to be held for the next 1500 years, in Malpas church, for the souls of Brereton, his wife, children, and ancestors. The mass was to be sung at the schoolmaster's expense. The master was also required to pay for the curate, six priests, and four clerks to sing at this obit, as well as for the bells to be rung that day, and for the 'church woman' to keep a light burning on the hearse; he also covered the cost of the five lights to burn on Brereton's grave during the mass, as well as other candles. For the St George's Day obit, he had to pay for masses to be sung in St George's chapel (built by Brereton and housing his tomb), unless he sang them himself, as well as five pounds of wax to repair and maintain the five 'syrges' (lights) to burn before the image of St George on 'solempne feasts'.

These were not all of the Malpas schoolmaster's religious duties. He and his students were obliged to be present at a mass in Lent, saying the dirige and commendations if they could, for the souls of the founder's family. He also performed masses before Christmas (twenty-four of them to fulfill the Trental), as well as five masses every quarter, for the Five Wounds, with a collect, for the founder's family's souls. The schoolmaster was also in charge of the lands belonging to the school and had to make an annual account of the rents from them to whoever had appointed him, with surplus rents going towards the repair of the school and to ornamenting St George's chapel. It seems clear that this schoolmaster was not the same person as the chantry priest because the foundation

document mentions a chantry priest singing in the rood-loft, and advising on the giving of alms, and he appears to have been a separate person from the schoolmaster.³⁸

Twenty years later, in 1548, the master of Skipton School, formerly a chantry foundation, is described as ‘the said chaplain’ throughout the school’s endowment deed. He came to Skipton church every Sunday and holiday for the service and the sermon (presumably with his students), but also three times during the week, before seven in the morning to read and sing, in a surplice, the deed specifies. Contrary to most schools, however, where clerical duties were not to take the master away from his teaching, at Skipton his teaching responsibilities were not to take him away from his reading in the church; he could be removed from the mastership for not fulfilling his ‘sacerdotal office’.³⁹ There was less to celebrate and commemorate in church, fewer saints days to observe, fewer candles to buy, and no more masses to sing, but in 1548 the master at Skipton still had a significant religious responsibility.

Later in the century, taking his students to church and ensuring that they absorbed the message of the sermon there, and teaching the catechism once a week, were the main religious duties of the schoolmaster. As the statutes for Hawkshead School describe him, the schoolmaster was, once a week, to ‘instructe, and examine his schollers in the prynciples of trewe Religion, to thende they maie the better knowe and feare god’; the schoolmaster was continuing to make sure his students absorbed and internalized the elements of ‘true religion’,

³⁸ Cheshire RO, DCH/C/446, Malpas School foundation charter.

³⁹ Northallerton, North Yorkshire Record Office, Records of Bolton Abbey, PR/BNA/18/1/1, endowment deed for Skipton Grammar School, 1548.

but he was doing so within a strictly prescribed framework which included an official version of the catechism and sermons given by licensed preachers.⁴⁰ An hour or two every week was set aside for the schoolmaster to expound the catechism to his students, although by the time the boys had begun to attend the school, they would already have had a good knowledge of the catechism, since they would have begun to learn it (or rather, the shorter version of Nowell's catechism) to prepare for confirmation. The schoolmaster's role by the time of Elizabeth's reign was to ensure that his students were correctly instructed in the official faith, through study of the catechism and attendance at sermons, rather than facilitating their participation in church ceremony as the Malpas schoolmaster did, or fulfilling church responsibilities himself, as at Warrington and Skipton. At Rivington the master could be removed for not taking the boys to church, or for teaching that which was contrary to the words of the Bible. The master at Wakefield could not take on a position in the church, but as a schoolmaster he had to teach religion 'out of God's book', and he is referred to in the statutes as a preacher, because he taught the elements of the Christian faith to his students.⁴¹

The master's own religious views was a factor in his appointment or dismissal, however; more often the latter is spelled out in school statutes than the former, but it was an official requirement that all schoolmasters be of a 'right understanding of God's true religion' – in other words, of the Church of England. School governors were required to examine schoolmasters 'in learning and

⁴⁰ Borthwick, Bp. Sch. 25, Hawkshead School foundation charter.

⁴¹ Borthwick, Bp. Sch. 46, foundation charter and statutes of Wakefield School.

religion' at the time of their appointment to office, but also, in some cases, during the regular visitations of the governors to the school; Rivington even required its governors to persuade any learned man visiting the area to come to the school and examine both the orthodoxy of the master and the progress of the students.⁴²

Requiring the students to listen to sermons given in church by licensed preachers avoided the possibility that unorthodox schoolmasters might be teaching them religious doctrine. This doctrine was not in the hands of the schoolmasters, but they still played a role in the framework of religious instruction outlined by the church. While he may have had less to 'do' in church, the English schoolmaster after the middle of the sixteenth century had taken on a new role; enforcing the religious settlement through his teaching was the new added element to his job.

Moral Standards

As much as drilling his students in the study of grammar, the schoolmaster was meant to mould the boys into obedient, industrious, Christian, young men, and thus was himself to be an example to them in this capacity. It was, therefore, extremely important to enforce strict standards of conduct on those men entrusted with bringing up the 'boys and youths' of the kingdom. Statutes and schoolmaster nominations may be less than forthcoming about a master's required marital status or religious outlook, but they do not fail to set forth in detail the high moral standards expected of a schoolmaster, both for taking up office, or for being removed from his post.

⁴² Lancashire RO, DDX 94/177, 159-60, statutes and charter of Rivington School.

A nominee to the post of ‘maister of the scolers’ at Guisborough School and almshouse was to be ‘examyned’ by the Archdeacon of Cleveland ‘touching his lernyng and honest livyng’, which were given equal importance. The master and wardens of the school, and the poor people of the attached almshouse, all took an oath, to live honestly and to follow the rules set down in the statutes; the schoolmaster’s oath additionally states that he must not take any wages, and that he is to do nothing which may hinder ‘the godlie bringynge up, or diligent instructing of the saied scolers’. He was then given the key to the school house by one of the wardens and told ‘you be now elect to be maister of the scolers of this scole of Jesus, to teache scolers hither resorting not onelie gram[er] and other vertuous doctrynes, but also honest man[er]s, and godlie living’. The master was now part of the corporation of the school and almshouse, and the office was his in ‘p[er]petual contynuaunce upon [his] good behavior, honest conv[er]sation, and dewtie doyng in [his] saied office’. The statutes also insist that he be at least thirty years old, and be, as was often required of both governors and students, a resident of the parish (Cleveland, in this case) for at least three years.⁴³

If the master of Archbishop Holgate’s School, York, in 1546 committed ‘herysie, treason, murder or felony’ his position was declared ‘voyd’.⁴⁴ While the last three seem obvious grounds for dismissal, it is significant that heresy is included in this list, as it is well in advance of the Elizabethan requirement that a schoolmaster have ‘right understanding of God’s true religion’.⁴⁵ In addition, if

⁴³ Borthwick, Bp. Sch. 18, 7, 4, Guisborough School foundation charter.

⁴⁴ Borthwick, Bp. Sch. 53, 5, Holgate’s School foundation charter.

⁴⁵ “Injunctions Given by the Queen’s Majesty, 1559”, Injunction 40, in Cressy, *Education in Tudor and Stuart England*, 28.

the master was ‘a comon dronkerd’, failed to pay his usher, was negligent in keeping his school, committed a crime, or had a disease that prevented him from teaching, certain men from the parish in which the school was located, as well as clergymen from the cathedral, were able to remove him from his position.⁴⁶ At Hawkshead school forty years later, the grounds for a schoolmaster’s dismissal are identical: ‘heresie, treason, murder, or Fellonie’. First the founder and his successors, and later the governors and the Bishop of Chester, had the authority to chose his replacement. If the schoolmaster was negligent in his teaching, had a disease, committed a crime, had a particular vice, or was, as in Holgate’s statutes, a ‘comon drunkard’, he could be, after sufficient warning, removed from his post, in a manner virtually identical to that described in Holgate’s statutes.⁴⁷

Negligence, drunkenness, and vice are also mentioned in the Guisborough statutes of 1561, to which the founder has added that the master should not be a ‘dicer’ or ‘carder’.⁴⁸ None of the statutes discussed here specifically mentions the religion of the schoolmaster as grounds for his removal from office, not even at Holgate’s or Sandys’ schools, founded by Protestant archbishops, and in Sandys’ case, well after the Elizabethan settlement, but it would be grounds for removal from office, alongside the more frequently specified negligence and low moral standards. The Guisborough master’s requirements of ‘honest conversation’ and ‘of good name and fame’ speak to the master’s moral suitability for the job, but they do not imply his adherence to the official religion.⁴⁹

⁴⁶ Borthwick, Bp. Sch. 53, 5, Holgate’s School foundation charter.

⁴⁷ Borthwick, Bp. Sch. 25, 9, Hawkshead School foundation charter.

⁴⁸ Borthwick, Bp. Sch. 18, 11, Guisborough School foundation charter.

⁴⁹ Borthwick, Bp. Sch. 18, 4, Guisborough School foundation charter.

It was, therefore, the schoolmaster's moral character, just as much as the quality and level of his formal education, which qualified him to teach; the statutes of Wakefield school even state that not only the schoolmaster, but also the usher would be held to his duties by God at the day of judgement. His profession was judged not by worldly standards, but by God himself.⁵⁰

Schoolmasters' Teaching Methods

It was common, particularly later in the century, for schoolmasters to revise *Lily's Grammar* or to supplement it with dictionaries and lists of Latin phrases, or to write plays for performance by their students; some were even authors on other subjects as well, such as educational theory, grammar, rhetoric, or even religion. These supplementary texts were frequently published, perhaps because other schoolmasters asked for them, or to make copies for young inexperienced teachers, or to impress a patron. Particularly earlier in this period, these were often the works of masters of the leading grammar schools. They were meant to make school life easier for the boys, by making grammatical rules easier to memorise, or Latin phrases more accessible and easier to learn. This would, of course, also make the schoolmaster's job much easier, so perhaps that was one important motivation for writing them.⁵¹ The library of Shrewsbury School, for instance, once contained 'too little bookes of Dialogues drawn out of Tullyes

⁵⁰ Brinsley, *Ludus Literarius*, 1-3, 267, 305-6; Borthwick, Bp. Sch. 46, foundation charter and statutes for Wakefield School.

⁵¹ Green, *Humanism and Protestantism*, 99.

offices and Lodovicus Vives by Mr Thomas Ashton'.⁵² This is an example of a schoolmaster drawing out the most relevant, the most useful, or most important elements of Cicero's *De officiis* and of Vives' writing; the fact that they were dialogues might imply that they were used for the students to read aloud, this being an important component of the grammar school training, and especially given Ashton's reputation for staging plays. In either case, the presence of these books in the classroom illustrates the fact that schoolmasters did sometimes try to make the texts they taught somewhat more accessible to their students by bringing together all the most relevant parts of the text, in a manner which reflects the technique of keeping a commonplace book. Nicholas Udall's *Floures for Latin Speaking* (1533) is a similar type of text, drawing out phrases and aphorisms from the works of Terence.

One might wonder whether schoolmasters also tried to make the texts with which they worked more accessible to themselves. For example, a well-used copy of Lily's *Brevissima institutio grammatices* from 1557 is preserved in the Leeds Brotherton Library alongside an English translation of the same text, in unpublished manuscript form: it is dated to between 1560 and 1600, written in a rather untidy hand, on large sheets of paper tied together with strips of old used parchment. There is no description of what purpose this translation was meant to have served, but is it possible that these were 'notes' for the schoolmaster, to aid him in teaching Lily's second book of grammar? This would be a sensible guess, but it is a tentative one: surely a schoolmaster would have such a good command of Latin that he would not need such English notes? But it may certainly have

⁵² Oldham, "Shrewsbury School Library: Its Earlier History and Organization", 54.

made his job easier. The fact that it was apparently unpublished, and looks very plain and hastily made, suggests that it was written up by a schoolmaster for his own use.⁵³ We know that masters wrote material to help their students approach Lily and the classical authors, but it is entirely plausible that they did the same thing for themselves.

This creation of supplementary texts, writing of dictionaries, and revising of Lily recalls the earlier practice of schoolmasters writing their own grammar texts, or copying and amending the texts of other masters. Early in this period, then, schoolmasters were very much free to create their own material to help their students practice Latin, using one of the accepted medieval grammar texts, by Donatus, Priscian, or Ville-Dieu, alongside sentences of their own devising for translation practice. The practice of using *vulgaria* to practice Latin gradually fell out of use by the time Lily's *Grammar* became the standard text, largely due to the humanist preference for directly imitating the classical authors and being exposed to their works rather than using sentences written by contemporary schoolmasters. Yet in both of Lily's grammar texts, there are no sentences to give to students to translate, no standardized equivalent to the earlier *vulgaria*, except perhaps the short 'Godly Lessons' found in earlier editions of the *Introduction to the Eight Parts of Speech*; these could, in theory, be used for translation and parsing in the same manner as the *vulgaria*. But there was no sense by the 1540s that a schoolmaster would still need *vulgaria* – sentences taken and translated from the 'best authors' were now the way forward for translation practice, so a

⁵³ University of Leeds, Brotherton Library, Brotherton Collection MS Lg q 1, *Brevissima institutio grammaticis*, 1557, and unpublished manuscript English translation, c. 1560-1600.

standard grammar text did not necessarily make earlier teaching methods easier, because those teaching methods had already begun to change.

A number of schoolmasters compiled dictionaries for their students' use: John Harmar at St Alban's in 1637 wrote a Greek dictionary for use at the school there; William Malym in the 1570s wrote a polyglot lexicon while headmaster at St Paul's; John Baret compiled a dictionary while teaching in London, published in 1574: this was Baret's *Alvearie*, in English, Latin, and French, a book frequently found in school libraries.⁵⁴ Some even edited the classical texts they used in their classrooms: John Bond, during his twenty-two-year career at Taunton school, edited an edition of Horace, explaining both the sense of any unclear passages and some of the references and context of Horace's work; this was published in 1614, and was part of Bond's interest in other subjects alongside his teaching work, such as classical studies and medicine.⁵⁵ Schoolmasters might bequeath books to the school at which they taught: Thomas Rudd of Bury St Edmunds did just this in his will of 1573, along with his desk, although he does not specify which books these were; John Woodhouse in 1632 left Erasmus' *Chiliades* and a 'Nizolius' to the grammar school of Chichester where he was master, and John Baker at Shrewsbury in 1608 left several books on astronomy, cosmography, and arithmetic, as well as twenty-three small maps, 'to be placed in the librarie of the sayd schoole there to remaine to the use of the schoolmaster and schollers of the saide schoole for the tyme being forever'. The books set aside for

⁵⁴ Elisabeth Leedham-Green, 'Harmar, John (1593x6-1670)', *ODNB*, accessed 3 March, 2015; Stephen Wright, 'Malym (Malim), William (1533-1594)', *ODNB*, accessed 22 November 2011; John Baret, *An Alvearie or Triple Dictionarie in Englishe, Latin, and French: Very Profitable for All Such as be Desirous of Any of Those Three Languages* (Henry Denham, 1574), EEBO.

⁵⁵ John Bond, *Quinti horatii flacci poemata scholiis sive annotationibus, quae brevis commentarii vice esse possint a Ioanne Bond illustrata* (Richard Field, 1606), EEBO; S.F. Ryle, 'Bond, John (c. 1550–1612)', *ODNB*, accessed 18 November 2011.

the master's school were not the only ones he might own, however, as the wills of Thomas Rudd, John Baker, and John Woodhouse illustrate. Most of Thomas Rudd's books were left to friends, and were varied in content, including a Latin Bible, Polydore Vergil's Chronicle of England, Galen's *Epitome*, an English and Latin thesaurus, and an unspecified work of Plutarch. John Baker similarly left two histories, Appian's history of the Roman civil wars and Diodorus Siculus' *Bibliotheca historica*, to a friend, just as John Woodhouse left a *Civili opera Menadrini*, the *Opera* of Athanasius, a 'Flaviane Chronicle', and a copy of Stowe's Chronicle.⁵⁶ Such books may give us an insight into the scholarly interests of these schoolmasters, although we do not know how closely the books were read by their owners.

To return to the pedagogical methods employed by English schoolmasters, we find that the educational theories from the mid-sixteenth century, from Roger Ascham and Thomas Becon, were in fact taken up by 'career' teachers later in the century, such as Richard Mulcaster and John Brinsley, to improve and streamline the educational process – not everyone, then, was satisfied with the traditional grammar school 'system', yet the system persisted alongside attempts to alter it.⁵⁷ Despite what the school founders or the church or state might say, the schoolmaster had some degree of independence over the curriculum of his school in practice, in terms of the texts he chose to teach and the way he opted to present them to the students, and in terms of whether or not he used any supplementary

⁵⁶ TNA, PROB 11/55/447, will of Thomas Rudd, master of Bury St Edmund's, 1573; TNA, PROB/11/162/164, will of John Woodhouse, master of Chichester, 1632; TNA, PROB/11/111/26, will of John Baker, gentleman and second schoolmaster of the Free Grammar School of Shrewsbury, 1608.

⁵⁷ Green, *Humanism and Protestantism*, 104.

texts alongside the standard Lily, and which texts those were. What does this tell us about the profession of schoolmastering, and about pedagogic thinking? How does this affect uniformity? What would happen if a recusant or secretly Puritan schoolmaster wrote such texts? The way in which schoolmasters were licensed after 1559 would have largely weeded out such unorthodox masters, and while the master did have some choice of what to teach, he really did not have much room to deviate from the body of classical texts considered necessary to a humanist education. The efforts of individual schoolmasters did not create a significant change in pedagogical techniques as a whole in this period, just different ways in which the material of the humanist curriculum might be presented to students in particular schools by particular schoolmasters.

The curricula of the leading schools like Eton, Winchester, and St Paul's did evolve over the sixteenth century, gradually including more Greek, and using different textbooks, but these changes were subtle ones. Successful, well-endowed schools set the pattern for the ideal curriculum, and they were imitated as far as was practically possible. Lower forms might be more flexible with their methods to get the boys up to standard sooner, but the curricula of the sixteenth century grammar schools remained very similar, evolving up to the sixteenth century and not much thereafter, despite the suggestions from 'career teachers', who were in a position to fix their own teaching problems and alter the circumstances in which they taught.⁵⁸

⁵⁸ Green, *Humanism and Protestantism*, 82-3.

Schoolmasters on the Continent – Comparisons

How did English schoolmasters compare with those on the Continent, operating in different confessional contexts? Of Italian schoolmasters, it was said as early as the fourteenth century that if ‘you teach children, you perform a task for the state.’⁵⁹ It was less common in Italy for schoolmasters to have a university degree than it was in England, and they were only examined at the end of the sixteenth century, for their ‘competence’, not for their religion. One studied under a master, and could then become one – it was like a ‘craft’ rather than a ‘profession’, argues Paul Grendler. A teaching position might be passed from father to son (which we occasionally see in England, where an usher succeeded his father as master), or a schoolmaster might have a clerical position first. He could be married, in the Italian context, which would therefore imply that he was not a priest, and socially, he fell somewhere between professionals and artisans, in the lower middling sort.⁶⁰ The usher, or ‘repetitore’, occupied a far lower position, helping the youngest children to memorise grammatical rules, or with basic arithmetic, or with any other task not carried out by the master, very similar to his role in the English schools.⁶¹

The English pattern of religious instruction from home, church, and school was also strongly emphasised in the Lutheran German-speaking areas. Education was more ‘institutionalized’ there than in England, although it was not the

⁵⁹ Grendler, *The Universities of the Italian Renaissance*, 3.

⁶⁰ Grendler, *Universities of the Italian Renaissance*, 36-8.

⁶¹ Grendler, *Universities of the Italian Renaissance*, 40.

schoolmaster but the sexton of the church who taught the catechism after 1556.⁶² Anyone who taught children, however, was doing a vital duty in moulding devout Christian members of society, although in practice there was seen to be little honour in such a job; hence the middling background of clergy and teachers – it was a job no well-off person would willingly want to undertake.⁶³ Lutheran, Italian, and northern humanist pedagogues all saw the value of inculcating ‘civic virtues’, and it was in all cases the responsibility of church and state to ensure the moulding of good citizens.⁶⁴

Schoolmasters took on a new role as the Reformation progressed in England. They had been responsible for training future clergy before this time, as well as participating in church services or overseeing their students doing so, and these responsibilities were still expected of them, but they were also expected to play a part in enforcing the officially prescribed faith. They were to achieve this by taking their students to hear the sermon on Sundays and holidays, by instructing them in the catechism, and by inculcating a sense of Christian, Protestant, duty and morality. This is similar to the role of the schoolmaster in Lutheran areas of Europe, though not as rigorous and demanding. There was a greater interest by the state (although in practice it was the church) in overseeing education in England after the Reformation began to be implemented – although there was by no means a coherent educational ‘system’ in this period – as schools

⁶² Strauss, *Luther's House of Learning*, 21, 24.

⁶³ Strauss, *Luther's House of Learning*, 25.

⁶⁴ Strauss, “The State of Pedagogical Theory c. 1530: What Protestant Reformers Knew About Education”, in Strauss, ed., *Enacting the Reformation in Germany*, 85.

were increasingly seen as a means by which to uphold and enforce the religious policies made during the Tudor era, particularly after 1559. The role of the grammar schools, and of the masters of those schools, was changing, and the career of a schoolmaster was becoming more public and more varied in nature, extending beyond the ‘schoolmaster-grammarian’ pattern found early in the sixteenth century.

Teaching might be someone’s calling, but it was often seen by schoolmasters themselves as a thankless one, a profession which was also ‘toilsome’ - a ‘sisyphean task’, as John Bond described his twenty-two years as master of Taunton school.⁶⁵ By the seventeenth century, educational writers such as Henry Peacham, Thomas Fuller, and Marchmont Nedham could agree that schoolmastering was a task which was eminently useful to the public good, but which was held in the lowest esteem.⁶⁶ It was more of a problem with those who taught at an elementary level, since that level of teaching was mainly done to support oneself until one could enter a better-paid profession, which led to a variable quality of education and hence to a variable reputation among those who taught, but grammar school masters still faced the problem of having to be well-prepared and knowledgeable for a job which required a great deal of effort with little corresponding reward.⁶⁷ This was a constant theme throughout the early modern period: Thomas Elyot in the 1530s spoke of teachers who could teach far more effectively if ‘the name of a schoolmaster were not so much had in contempt and also if their labours with abundant salaries might be requited, were right

⁶⁵ S.F. Ryle, ‘Bond, John (c.1550–1612)’, *ODNB*, accessed 18 November 2011.

⁶⁶ Cressy, “A Drudgery of Schoolmasters”, 129-30.

⁶⁷ DeMolen, “Richard Mulcaster and the Profession of Teaching”, 126.

sufficient and able to induce their hearers to excellent learning'.⁶⁸ 'Our calling creeps low and hath pain for companion,' wrote Richard Mulcaster in 1581, 'still thrust to the wall though still confessed good.'⁶⁹ And similarly, John Brinsley's fictional schoolmaster Spoudeus speaks both of those schoolmasters 'whom God blesseth greatly in this calling', and of the 'moiling and drudging...thankless' job of teaching. Thomas Morrice, in his *An Apology for Schoole-masters*, condemns those parents who consider teaching to be a servile occupation, for in doing so, they 'abuse learned knowledge', given to us by God, and 'disgrace...the office of schoolemaster'.⁷⁰ We see later Elizabethan schoolmasters taking on more duties besides those of their classroom, but it should be borne in mind that they were often doing this out of necessity, to supplement what might frequently be a small income. David Cressy describes instances of schoolmasters taking on work as barbers, tailors, farmers, scriveners, and surveyors alongside their teaching duties.⁷¹ This is more frequently the case by the seventeenth century, as schoolmasters of schools endowed in the sixteenth century began to find that their income, adequate at the time of the school's foundation, had become less so due to inflation and rising rent costs.

Schoolmasters, in short, continued to fulfill their traditional role of training clergy and moulding good behaviour and morals in an almost fatherly sense; these duties remained in place throughout the early modern period, and emerge clearly in our sources as the duties of a schoolmaster which seem to have

⁶⁸ Thomas Elyot, *The Boke Named the Governor* (Thomas Berthelet, 1531), EEBO, f. 61 v.

⁶⁹ Mulcaster, *Positions*, 231.

⁷⁰ Brinsley, *Ludus Literarius*, 2-3; Morrice, *An Apology for Schoole-masters*, sig. D1 v.

⁷¹ Cressy, "A Drudgery of Schoolmasters", 147-8.

been most valued by contemporaries. These stand, though, alongside the new and less openly acknowledged role of training future figures of authority both ecclesiastical and secular, trained in the classical and humanist art of rhetoric, as well as a role in enforcing religious conformity among their students. Humanism and the Reformation were making the role of schoolmaster significant in ways it had not been before, but in practice, a job teaching grammar was still considered less desirable than one within the church.

CHAPTER 4

THE CLASSROOM EXPERIENCE

Thus far we have examined the curriculum of the grammar school, the way in which a school was established and administered, and the role of the schoolmaster, but what was it like to attend a grammar school? What was expected of a boy while he was in the classroom? That is the subject of the following chapter, the aim of which is to explore the world of the early modern schoolboy; in other words, his experience of his education. This chapter will begin by examining the content of both the Latin exercises the boys did and the Latin authors they read, with a focus on the moral nature (or otherwise) of the material they studied and the ways in which the approaches to Latin school texts changed over time. It will also move beyond the curriculum to examine diversions such as barring-out and the performance of plays, as well as school holidays and play-days and what was expected of the boys regarding this leisure time.

This is followed by a discussion of the disciplinary element of the schoolboy experience, including the rules observed in the classroom, and the use of corporal punishment, arguing that while the discipline found within the classroom reflected the wider social hierarchy, it was sometimes considered to run contrary to the aims of a humanist education. Finally, this chapter will examine school admission lists and matriculation records to discuss the social background of the boys who attended grammar school and what they were expected to go on to do with their education (this is explored in greater detail in Chapter Seven). The learning experience of early modern English schoolboys started to become more

uniform during the sixteenth century, and while some elements of school life, such as the threat of punishment, remained constant, the diversions encountered by a grammar school boy began to alter, becoming increasingly separated from the church calendar.

The Content of the Latin Exercises

The Latin curriculum has already been discussed in Chapter One; the textbooks used in teaching the language and the pedagogical methods used to teach it have already been examined, as have the problems of teaching Christian morals through largely classical texts. What has not been examined is the type of Latin these texts used, and the reasons behind the pedagogical methods involved in teaching the language. The authors read and studied by the grammar school boys had been writing for an adult audience, with correspondingly adult themes, and yet schoolmasters still tried to find ways of teaching these texts without corrupting the morals of their students. While Cicero and Quintilian might have recognized the way in which rhetoric was taught in early modern schools, the approach to reading a classical text and imitating the author's style was of necessity adapted for students who had to learn Latin from scratch, and thus involved more time in learning the basics of the language.¹ The Latin instruction provided at the grammar schools was of course a hugely significant factor in shaping the classroom experience, and so the following section will discuss the nature of the Latin taught there, drawing heavily on the texts that were used in the

¹ Skinner, *Forensic Shakespeare*, 25.

classroom, from the varied collections of *vulgaria* of the early sixteenth century to the standard Lily's *Grammar* used from the 1540s onward.

Early in this period, John Colet prescribed early Christian Latin poetry to be taught at St Paul's School, emphasizing it as much as the classical authors, if not more so. This was an unusual direction to take in terms of the curriculum, as most schools did not read early Christian literature, and by the time we know anything about how the St Paul's curriculum worked in practice, these Christian authors had largely dropped out of the corpus of set authors, and are rarely found in the curricula of other schools. Similarly, the French grammarian Clenardus tried to introduce a grammar text based on the writings of the Church Fathers, but this never took hold. There are a few main reasons why Christian authors did not displace, or become equal to, classical writers, reasons which involve their writing style, their overall message, and the context in which they were composed.

It is already well-established that imbibing a good Latin style of writing was the main goal of reading the 'best' classical authors, but if one could practise this writing style using Christian examples, would that not be ideal? Colet evidently thought so, when he prescribed the fifteenth-century Baptista Mantuanus, the 'Christian Virgil', for the boys at St Paul's – 'Mantuan' wrote as eloquently as Virgil, but on subjects suitable for impressionable schoolboys. The Latin was still 'uncorrupted' (written, in Colet's view, before the 'blind world' took over good Latin literature), yet the content of the works was Christian and therefore safely moral. But while the Latin style may have been of a standard similar to that of Cicero and Virgil, it was not considered to be at quite the same level as that of the classical authors. Vives, for instance, compared the early

Christian poets with their classical predecessors, and while he acknowledged that the content of the Christian authors was acceptable, and that there was some good quality imitation among them, particularly of Cicero and Virgil, he believed that they were not to be considered as ideal models of good compositional style, for, ‘after these writers, everything is more or less dangerous to recommend’:

Tertullian, for instance, ‘speaks very confusedly’, and St Ambrose was ‘a pleasant writer’ rather than ‘a Latin stylist’. St Jerome was more concerned with his Christian subject matter than with his use of language, but Lactantius was ‘the most eloquent of all the Christian writers’, with most of his writing being ideal for imitation since he sounded almost Ciceronian.²

R.R. Bolgar has argued that when Colet included the Church Fathers in the curriculum for St Paul’s, he may have done so because he ‘still regarded the classics as a somewhat risky instrument of education’, or, ‘perhaps because he felt it best to pander to a backward public opinion’, and that Colet had not yet realised that he could choose particular texts and insist that they be studied for style, not content.³ While this may well have been in Colet’s mind when he created the curriculum, I would not entirely agree that these were the main reasons behind the inclusion of the Church Fathers. The content and style of the material read by schoolboys were concerns which were raised during this period, and it would therefore make sense that these issues would hold Colet back from introducing a purely classical curriculum. But rather than pandering to ‘backward’ opinion,

² Juan Luis Vives, “De tradendis disciplinis”, in *Vives: On Education. A Translation of the De tradendis disciplinis of Juan Luis Vives*, ed. Foster Watson (Totowa, NJ: Rowman and Littlefield, 1913, repr. 1971), 154-55.

³ R.R. Bolgar, *The Classical Heritage and Its Beneficiaries* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1958), 341.

Colet's vision for St Paul's School was to teach 'the verrye Romaine eloquence joyned with wisdom, specially Cristen autors', and in this light, reading early Christian material alongside classical material does not seem too unusual.⁴ Bolgar also states that St Paul's in 1512 was the first school to put humanist ideas into practice, but this had in fact been begun earlier than that, however gradually, at Magdalen College School in particular.

It may also have been the case that the works of the Church Fathers and their contemporaries were not as widely available in England or on the continent as those of the more well-known classical authors, although they were printed in England as well as on the continent, and some, such as Augustine, Ambrose, and Cyprian, had their works translated into English; the works which were translated into English and printed in England tended to be prayers or sermons.⁵ Another reason why these authors did not earn a permanent place in the curriculum may be that their general 'message' was not as useful in the humanist-inspired grammar school context: in other words, the classical message of serving the commonwealth virtuously was much more appropriate and useful to grammar school boys than the patristic one of adopting a religious life, a message more suited to the monastic life of the middle ages and the older Catholic world.

⁴ "St Paul's School statutes", in Carlisle, *Concise Description*, II, 76.

⁵ For instance, Augustine, *Twelve Sermons of St Augustine Now Lately Translated into English by Tho. Paynel* (John Cawood, 1553 & 1557), *Godly Meditations Made in the Forme of Prayers by S. Augustine* (John Day, 1570), *Certain Select Prayers Gathered out of S. Augustine's Meditations Which He Calleth His Selfe Talke with God* (John Day, 1574 & 1577), *S. Augustines Manuell, or, Little Booke of the Contemplation of Christ, or of God's Word* (John Day, 1577); Ambrose, *A Devout Prayer of S. Ambrose, Very Expedient for All Suche as Prepare Them Selves to Saye Masse* (John Cawood, 1555), *Twoo Bookes of Saint Ambrose Bysshoppe of Mylleyne, Entytuled; Of the Vocation and Callyng of all Nations. Newly Translated out of Latin into Englyshe* (Richard Watkins, 1561); Cyprian, *A Swete and Devoute Sermon of Holy Saynt Ciprian of Mortalitie of Man...Translated into Englyshe by Syr Thomas Elyot Knyghte* (Thomas Betholet, 1534 & 1539), *A Sermon of S. Cyprian Made on the Lordes Prayer That is to Wytte, the Paternoster* (Thomas Berthelet, 1539) *A Spirituall Preservative Against the Plague in Two Parts* (Benjamin Fisher, 1625), EEBO.

Christian authors such as Augustine, Ambrose, Cyprian, and Lactantius were also writing at a time when heresies within the early church were being repressed.⁶ While some scholars, like Petrarch, Luther, and Colet, valued the early Christian authors and their continuity with the classical tradition, the patristic-era poets were often included in the Renaissance's negative picture of the middle ages generally, by Vives, and Aldus Manutius, for example.⁷ Even in Catholic countries the Church Fathers did not form a significant proportion of the curriculum; in Jesuit schools, early Christian writers were included, such as St Basil, St Gregory, and John Chrysostom for examples of exemplary Greek use, but the focus was on the classical authors.⁸

The early Christian poets recommended by Colet shared some important similarities with the schoolboys of the sixteenth century. They had been trained to imitate the best classical authors, particularly Virgil; even if they came from Christian families already, they still received a traditional Roman education. For these early Christian poets, the content of the poetry came first, and the classical form made it more beautiful and persuasive. They may have objected to the fictitious classical content of the poems studied in school, but consciously maintained the form of the classical poetry they had studied. For them, poetry conveyed Christian truth, not frivolous amusement, seeing that the classical form, though not the content, could be used towards a Christian purpose.⁹ In the early modern context, schools were not reading early Christian authors, but were

⁶ Carolinne White, *Early Christian Latin Poets* (London: Routledge, 2000), 14-15.

⁷ White, *Early Christian Latin Poets*, 3.

⁸ *Ratio atque institutio studiorum*, in *The Ratio Studiorum: The Official Plan for Jesuit Education*, ed. Claude Pavur (St Louis, MO: The Institute of Jesuit Sources, 2005), 163.

⁹ White, *Early Christian Latin Poets*, 6-8.

instead imitating the style of the classical Greek and Roman authors, often despite the content of those authors' works. This would, in part, explain the willingness of schoolmasters, school founders, and ecclesiastical authorities to allow classical literature to be studied as part of an otherwise Christian education, because learning from and imitating the compositional and rhetorical style of that literature was so highly desirable. In this case, style was emphasized over content.

Before the boys began to master the works of the great Roman authors, however, they learned the rules of Latin grammar. Early in the century, and indeed before 1500 as well, the method of practising Latin most commonly in use was that of 'making Latins', or translating short sentences from English into Latin; the English sentences were known as *vulgaria*. These sentences might also include pieces of dialogue, or *colloquies*, a method of teaching used throughout the middle ages and emphasized early in the sixteenth century by humanists like Erasmus for whom it was increasingly important to speak Latin well. Over time, we see an increase in examples and quotations taken from various classical works, as well as a standardization of the texts used to implement these methods. Until the imposition of Lily's *Grammar* as the standard, official, grammar text used by all English grammar schools after 1540, the texts used tended to be specific to particular schools, written by the schoolmaster and copied by his students, and survive in manuscript form, even decades after the first appearance of print in England. Two examples of early Tudor schoolbooks, and one from slightly earlier still, will serve to illustrate the type of material used in the early sixteenth century, before moving on to the standardized content of William Lily's text.

The earliest of the three, from Canterbury c. 1480, is very medieval in content, including a fifteenth-century courtesy poem originally written for the boys of Winchester and Eton, as well as various notes from medieval grammarians on points of grammar, in addition to *vulgaria* with their Latin translations. These *vulgaria* deal with matters of everyday life and what was going on out in the world in late fifteenth-century England: some discuss going to school ('I am com to lere gramer'), or religious practice ('John behovys a new gone a-yenst ye fest of Pasche'), or pieces of news ('Owr gardener and hys wyfe and owr manciple ar to be accused of mannessloghter') and others are proverbs, again drawn from ordinary experience or received wisdom: 'Nes no mon so shroid as a beger mad a lord', or 'Brend honde dredythe fyre'. Overall it is very accessible, familiar material, with some moral guidance inserted throughout, but making little use of any classical material.¹⁰

The next text, MS Arundel 249, from Magdalen College School, Oxford, c. 1490, is broader in its range of topics used, discussing everyday life at home with one's family, food and drink, the seasons, and waking up in the morning; the text moves on to studying Latin, playing games, 'witty and dull' students, and the master's rod, and ends with general moral advice, short passages on 'Men and Manners of Antiquity', 'Epistolary Scraps', 'Polite and Impolite Conversation', and 'News'. The *vulgaria* passages concerned with 'Antiquity' draw upon the boys' previous reading of classical texts, albeit in quite a general sense: they speak of the Romans who 'hade so great a love to the comynwelth that rather thei wolde sley themselfe than they wolde departe from that that was the comyn welth, as we

¹⁰ Printed in Orme, "School Exercises from Canterbury, c. 1480", *Archaeologia Cantiana*, cxxxi, (2011), 118, 120-21, 124.

rede of the noble mann Cato...’, and lament the fact that ‘Virgil and Tully and many other of the Romans, were more eloquent than the auctors that be nowadais’, because of their virtuous lives and scorn for worldly glory. The section on epistles contains phrases for use in letter writing, as the section title suggests, but they are strongly reminiscent of the sentences found in Erasmus’s *De copia*, although this schoolbook is older than the *De copia*, and does not provide the boys with multiple different ways to say, for instance, ‘right wel belovede father and mother, we long greatly to se youe, whose selfe sight was wonte allway to be to us a great conforte’ as Erasmus’s work does.¹¹

The third text is very similar. It dates to either the mid-1510s or the 1520s, and is also from Magdalen College School. It is also much longer than the Canterbury text, and the content follows a similar pattern to the Arundel manuscript, drawing on everyday goings-on, moral advice, and quotations from Horace, Cicero, Ovid, and other such authors. Among the *vulgaria* which deal with schoolboy life, one is particularly interesting for the reference it makes to the plague, and the disruptive effect it could have upon a school: ‘When we last [went] fo[r]the from the universite for sikenes, we had a fole slutty kechyn for owr scole, but now we be prouydyd of a place a litylmore honest, how be it is but a stable...’. One could argue that because of the inclusion of this familiar subject matter, these *vulgaria* provide us with just as vivid a picture of grammar school life as do the texts from later in the period. The Oxford text contains less religious material than the text from 1480, and more reference to the classical authors the boys were reading: it includes quotes and paraphrases from Cicero, Ovid, and

¹¹ Nelson, ed., *A Fifteenth-Century Schoolbook*, 63-64, 66.

Terence, on the themes of eloquence and the good that teaching will do for the commonwealth, as well as the passage ‘I am purposid to leue my cuntre annd go in-to italie and that oonly for the desire of latyn and greke, for thought [sic] I can fynd here in ynglonde that can theche me, yet by-cause I thynke I can lerne better ther than her I haue a gret desire to goo thether’.¹²

There were of course other, more well-known, texts, circulating in print rather than solely in manuscript, such as books of *vulgaria* by John Anwykyll, John Stanbridge, Robert Whittington, and William Horman, published prior to 1520. Horman’s text was printed specifically for the boys of Eton, but the others were used more widely. Horman’s *Vulgaria* included a passage about vain women who alter their appearance and are consequently less beautiful than ‘honest women’, and, rather more bluntly, the statement that ‘a common woman liveth by her body’ – to the modern mind, these passages seem pitched at a rather older audience than a group of schoolboys, but they were another acceptable way of imparting a moral lesson.¹³

Lily’s *Grammar* contains fewer such ‘practice’ sentences; the *vulgaria* method was becoming outdated by the time *An Introduction of the Eyght Parties of Speche* and *A Short Introduction of Grammar* were published as the official standard grammar texts in 1540. The 1542 edition of the *Introduction of the Eyght Parties of Speche* contained a section of ‘Godly Lessons’; these do not appear in the edition of thirty years later, since Nowell’s catechism of 1570 had appeared by that time. These ‘Lessons’ were short sentences in English, followed by a Latin

¹² Printed in Orme, “An Early-Tudor Oxford Schoolbook”, 11-39, 35.

¹³ William Horman, *Vulgaria*, (Richard Pynson, 1519), f. 169 r-170 v, f. 66 r, as well as much of Chapter 7, “De vitiis et improbis moris”, f. 64 r-78 v, EEBO.

translation, and were neither strongly traditional nor strongly reformed in character. The moral conduct poem *Carmen de moribus*, written by William Lily and appearing in the first edition of *An Introduction of the Eyght Partes of Speche* (1542), and in *A Short Introduction of Grammar* as early as 1549, does remain present in later editions of the texts, which also included prayers to be said at the end of the school day and graces for before and after meals. Both Biblical and classical names were used to illustrate the declensions of difficult nouns, but the material taken from everyday experience or familiar Latin authors found in the earlier texts was no longer present in Lily's text.¹⁴ The standardization of the text used in the classroom would remove some of the originality of the earlier *vulgaria*, replacing them, not with a more serious or more useful text, but with one which was more uniform and approved by royal authority.

Once the students were ready to read the great authors themselves, there was still the problem of protecting the boys from the immorality of some of the works they were about to read. Schoolmasters tended to gloss over, or explain away, anything immoral or, later, 'ungodly', as at Ruthin, where 'in reading poetical Authors and others such places may be overlooked [in the sense of ignored or disregarded] that may savour of what is contrary to Piety and good Moral[sic]'.¹⁵ Texts might even be rewritten to make them suitably moral (by schoolmasters, one might presume, although this is not certain), capturing, if not an idealized Renaissance conception of the ancient world, then at least an idealized view of the texts themselves, and emphasizing the moralizing capacity

¹⁴ Lily, *An Introduction of the Eyght Partes of Speche*, sig. Fii v- Fiiii r.

¹⁵ "Ruthin School rules", in Sylvester, ed., *Educational Documents*, 113-114.

of the text as much as possible; another option was to point out any similarities and parallels with the Bible.¹⁶ This raises the question of what the point would be of studying these texts if they had been made so different from what they were originally – the reader would only be exposed to part of the text, affecting the overall meaning of the work, and if it was re-written in parts, the compositional style might not be the same and this would affect the quality of the Latin.

Most texts seem to have been approached not as a whole but in deliberately small sections. There were two main ways to achieve this: the schoolmaster would read a passage of the text to his students every day or every week, gradually exposing them to a whole text over the course of several months, and the students themselves would keep commonplace books, looking for smaller sections of texts to pull out and keep for future use; both of these approaches would also more easily allow the schoolmaster to avoid any passages deemed unsuitable for his students.¹⁷ The inclusion of certain classical texts was criticized, for instance by the schoolmaster and preacher John Stockwood in the late 1570s, who particularly objected to the ‘unedifying’ works of Terence. In a sermon of 1578, he asked his listeners if they know of one example of a person ‘whome, eyther *Tullie* his Offices, or *aristotle* his Ethickes, or *plato* his Precepts of maners [at the expense of Christian instruction], ever yet made a godly and vertuous man’. Stockwood declared that he was not ‘against the teaching of prophane

¹⁶ Françoise Waquet, *Latin, or the Empire of a Sign*, transl. John Howe (London: Verso, 2001), 36, 115; Burrow, *Shakespeare and Classical Antiquity*, 4: Burrow raises the point that ancient Greece before the eighteenth century did not have connotations of perfect beauty and political freedom, and Rome had Catholic associations. Renaissance humanists idealised the ideas and written work that came out of those cultures, but not necessarily the cultures themselves.

¹⁷ See Baldwin, *Shakspeare's Small Latine*, I, 321-52, for a detailed discussion of how long a schoolmaster might spend on a particular text, using BL Add. MS 4379, William Badger's notebook from Winchester College, c. 1565, as his example.

writers: I knowe they have their use'; the problem for him lay in teaching these authors at the expense of Christian instruction.¹⁸ Yet the prevailing, humanist, view recognized the value of classical authors in teaching Latin, and their authority as classical texts – and so their place within the humanist curriculum – was not seriously challenged.

Latin was taught to be spoken, as a living language, during the sixteenth century. As such, one method of ensuring that the boys learned to speak it was to require them to speak only Latin while in the classroom, or in some cases, during the entire school day, even during the breaks. As a schoolbook from Magdalen College School in the 1490s states: 'Iff I hade not usede my englysh tongue so greatly, the which the maistre hath rebuked me ofte times, I shulde have ben fare more lighter (or, conyng) in grammar. wis men saye that nothyng may be more profitable to them that lurns grammer than to speke latyn'.¹⁹ It was a constant preoccupation, or vexation, of the schoolboy, this requirement to speak Latin, the language he was struggling to learn, and not English, his own language. The rules drawn up in 1574 for Ruthin school in Wales direct that the boys of the upper school must speak either Latin or Greek, only, and the lower school boys must only speak English (as opposed to Welsh), and if they did not do so they were 'deemed a Delinquent or faulty'. Monitors were assigned to each form, to watch for boys who failed to speak in Latin and to report them to the master. The language teacher John Palsgrave found that students from the more remote areas of England, or from Wales, might learn to speak and write Latin very well, but not

¹⁸ Ben Lowe, 'Stockwood, John (d. 1610)', *ODNB*, accessed 22 Nov 2011; John Stockwood, *A Sermon Preached at Paules Crosse on Barthlemew Day, Being the 24. of August 1578* (Henry Bynneman, 1578), EEBO, 91.

¹⁹ Nelson, ed., *A Fifteenth-Century Schoolbook*, 22.

be able to translate well into English; this was the case, Palgrave claimed, among both the boys and schoolmasters. Grammar schools could not always ‘correct’ these regional variations, since English was not spoken or practised in writing to the same degree as Latin.²⁰

Yet students were still learning how to use the vernacular to a high standard; while the art of rhetoric may have been taught through the medium of Latin, the eventual expectation was that the boys would be able to speak or write well in English. The English language was never seen as a subject of study on its own, but was instead practiced indirectly through the study of the more standard, consistent, Latin. It was also Latin, and not English, which needed more practice, and therefore required more space in the timetable. One must also remember that when translating a passage from Latin into English, the boys were corrected on the quality of the *English* translation they had produced. When English grammar and composition eventually became a subject of study in the schools in its own right, it was not so much that English had been added in to the school curriculum, but rather, that the Latin had been gradually reduced.²¹ English instruction had been present in this period, but it was in the sense of reading and writing the language; to study it beyond this basic level was possible throughout the seventeenth century for those who were not intended to follow the Latin curriculum, such as at Exeter, where the grammar school was re-founded in 1627 with an English school alongside, and for teachers being licensed to teach English, as at Bottisham, Cambridgeshire in 1597 and at Watford in 1607. It was not until

²⁰ “Ruthin School Rules”, in Sylvester, ed., *Educational Documents*, 110; Baldwin, *Shakspeare’s Small Latine*, I, 479-80.

²¹ Nelson, “The Teaching of English in Tudor Grammar Schools”, *Studies in Philology*, 49, 2 (April 1952): 131-34, 143.

the eighteenth century that the terms ‘English school’ and ‘English teacher’ were regularly used, yet still in reference to the specific skill of reading and writing, rather than to a separate academic subject of ‘English’, which would not fully develop until the nineteenth century.²² The only English-language components of the curriculum, the sermon on Sundays, the prayers at the start and finish of each day, and the occasional play, do seem very small compared to the amount of Latin instruction, but this is not to say that the boys did not learn to make better use of their own language.

Plays and Play-Days, Barring-out, Cockfighting, and Other Diversions

On 30 September, 1591, the governors of the Free Grammar School in Blackburn agreed that there would be ‘noe butcharing or killing of flesshe within the same school’, that ‘no Englisshe enterludes or playes shalbe from henceforth playde or used’, and that there were to be ‘no extraordenarie playe dayes to be graunted’.²³ This rule may serve as an introduction to the types of non-academic activities which were conducted in grammar schools. The first of these agreements, regarding the killing of flesh, may refer to the practice, common in many grammar schools in the sixteenth century, of cockfighting, which will be discussed later.

²² Ian Michael, *The Teaching of English from the Sixteenth Century to 1870* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 372-75; Cambridge, LIC.A.I(4)I, teaching licence for William Hurst, 1597.

²³ Lancashire RO, DDBK 3/9, memoranda of money, deeds, and orders concerning payments by scholars of Blackburn School, 1591.

The second point, that of English interludes, presents an interesting problem, as some schools did perform plays in English, while some performed them only in Latin, while still others did not perform plays at all. Did the governors of Blackburn School insist that the boys not perform any plays at all, or that they abandon the English ‘enterludes or playes’ for similar performances in Latin? Some schools performed plays in both English and Latin, and some schoolmasters even wrote these plays themselves: Nicholas Udall wrote plays in English for his students, which were performed at court in 1537-38.²⁴ This may be a practice more common to the early sixteenth century, as John Rightwise directed plays with the boys of St Paul’s, performed for the king, and Ralph Radcliffe wrote English and Latin anti-Catholic plays for his scholars at Hitchin in the 1540s.²⁵ Later in the century, however, Thomas Ashton, the famous headmaster of Shrewsbury School, wrote plays himself, performed annually in the town at Whitsuntide. These were religious plays, performed throughout the 1560s and, with the exception of one play on the subject of Julian the Apostate, they were largely passion plays. Queen Elizabeth herself wished to see these plays, and gave £10 to maintain their performance. Ashton himself had participated in such plays while at St John’s, Cambridge, and Shrewsbury was previously known for its mystery plays; the municipal authorities saw these plays as important for the town and allowed them to be performed, as, it appears, did the Queen.²⁶ Schoolboy plays based on Scripture started to become less and less common in the 1580s and

²⁴ Matthew Steggle, ‘Nicholas Udall (1504-1556)’, *ODNB*, accessed 22 November 2011.

²⁵ Richard Beadle, ‘John Rightwise (c.1490-1553)’, *ODNB*, accessed 22 November 2011; Margaret Healy, ‘Ralph Radcliffe (1518/19-1559)’, *ODNB*, accessed 22 November 2011.

²⁶ John Brickdale Blakeway, *A History of Shrewsbury School from the Blakeway Manuscripts*, ed. William Allport Leighton (Shrewsbury, 1889), 53, 56; Oldham, *A History of Shrewsbury School*, 12.

1590s, shortly after Ashton's time at Shrewsbury, and in 1605 they were banned altogether.²⁷

Ashton also made use of Latin drama for more purely instructional purposes, as he expected the boys of the top form to play one act of a comedy once a week; this would have helped them to master the skills of oratory and eloquent speech, just as disputations and declamations did, as well as help them better understand the authors they read and the Latin style those authors used. This, indeed, was one of the main purposes of including drama within the curriculum: not only was drama part of the body of classical literature, but performing a scene, or even an entire play, was excellent practice in speaking well, in the elements of speech, voice, memory, and gesture which were so vital to the art of rhetoric. These skills were such a key part of the grammar school curriculum that the 1571 *Booke of Certaine Canons, Concernyng Some Parte of the Discipline of the Churche of England*, though it makes no mention of plays, even refers to the schoolmaster's duty to 'order and frame the tongues of children, that they may pronounce openly, plainly, and distinctly'.²⁸ Richard Mulcaster's students at Merchant Taylor's school in the 1570s also performed plays, but these were for a court audience. Whether they were actually performed before an audience, and not just before one's classmates, is something that seems to have varied between the schools, yet performing a play was recognized as an excellent way to practice the elements of speech-delivery, pronunciation, and gesture which were so important in humanist rhetorical training.²⁹

²⁷ Collinson, *Birthpangs of Protestant England*, 113.

²⁸ Church of England, *A Booke of Certaine Canons*, 27, EEBO.

²⁹ Enterline, *Shakespeare's Schoolroom: Rhetoric, Discipline, Emotion*, 39-41.

In some cases these plays were read aloud in class, as with the one act per week read by Thomas Ashton's students, but in other cases, the boys were putting on actual performances. Ralph Radcliffe's plays at Hitchin School were performed before a public audience, on a stage, at the former Hitchin Priory, where the school was located. At Westminster School after 1560, the boys performed plays at Christmas, or shortly thereafter, in order that they '*better become accustomed to proper action and pronunciation* [my emphasis]...the Master and Usher together shall cause their pupils and the choristers to act, in private or public, a Latin comedy or tragedy in Hall, and the Choristers' Master an English one', with a fine of 10s if they did not.³⁰ The Eton College Audit Books, which list the money spent and received by the school, mention, in 1558, a chest in the schoolmaster's chamber which contained 'players clothes', around twenty items of fancy clothing; there is no description of what they were specifically used for, and there is a gap in the records of headmasters at around this time, so it is difficult to say who the schoolmaster was who had had the costumes in his possession, but the presence of these 'player's clothes' is potentially indicative of a dramatic tradition at the school.³¹

Despite the very long hours spent in school, most schools had partial days off besides Sundays, usually called 'play-days', or sometimes 'remedies'. It was common for Thursday or Saturday afternoon, as well as feast days, to be designated play-days, as at Northwich, or only ever a Thursday afternoon and only at the request of a 'great worshipful man', as at Warrington and Bristol; in

³⁰ "Westminster School Statutes", in Leach, *Educational Charter and Documents*, 519.

³¹ Eton College Archives, Eton, Eton College Audit Books, 62/3.

the case of Bristol this man was to be the mayor.³² Play-days seem to have been granted quite regularly, though never more than once a week, unless there was a holiday falling in the week, but they were never intended to be a regular practice, and were to be granted only with good reason, as at Guisborough School.³³ Robert Holgate and John Colet did not allow any play-days at their schools, though in some cases a visiting civic or ecclesiastical official might allow one: the St Paul's master, for instance, had to pay a 40s. fine if he allowed a 'remedye', 'except the Kyng, or an Archbishopp, or a Bishop present in his own person in the Scole desire it'.³⁴ At Bristol Grammar School, in 1532, in addition to church holidays, the only potential 'play-days' were Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday afternoons, yet the only thing that distinguished these times from the rest of the week was that they were spent practising writing; this, however, was surely some slight reprieve from the usual routine of grammar instruction.³⁵ It was recognized, then, that a six-day school week was not always easy for young boys to sit through, but attempts to break up the monotony were fairly circumscribed.

Even the leisure time of the boys might be strictly controlled, as at Shrewsbury, where the master from 1561 until 1571, the aforementioned Thomas Ashton, insisted that the only suitable recreations for the boys were archery, chess, and running, wrestling, or leaping. They were to be expelled for betting, but do seem to have been allowed to win very small amounts of money through their

³² Cox, *John Deane's School, Northwich*, 37; Cheshire RO SL382/18/1 Warrington Boteler foundation deed, 1526; "Bristol Grammar School rules, 1533", in Carlisle, *Concise Description*, II, 406.

³³ Borthwick, Bp. Sch. 18, Guisborough School foundation charter.

³⁴ "St Paul's School statutes", in Carlisle, *Concise Description*, II, 75.

³⁵ "Bristol Grammar School rules," in Carlisle, *Concise Description*, II, 406.

games.³⁶ Archery was the approved recreation at Rivington and Northwich, which also forbade playing with cards, dice, or bowls; this is interesting in light of the fact that the only rule made early in the reign of Henry VIII concerning education was that which required all boys and men to practise archery.³⁷ At Sir John Deane's School, Northwich, the statutes were to be read in church every feast day before the school broke up for holidays, so that the boys would remember their duty while away from the school; the schoolmaster told them what they should do over the holidays (the statutes do not say what he told them, although a schoolbook from Oxford in the early sixteenth century describes a schoolmaster being disappointed in his students for not having made Latin verses during their holidays – the boys at Northwich were very likely given a similar sort of homework), and four trustees or churchwardens were present, to emphasize to the boys that they would be keeping an eye on their behaviour even while school was not in session.³⁸

The participation of the boys in church, and the duties expected of them there early in the century are discussed in the next chapter. However, the medieval ceremony of the 'Boy Bishop', observed in the schools attached to cathedrals, such as St Paul's School, was an extension of that church participation. Every 6 December, St Nicholas' Day, the boys would chose one of their number to be the bishop for the day, and on the 28 December, the feast of the Holy Innocents, this Boy Bishop would lead the service, deliver a sermon (written for him), and bless

³⁶ Oldham, *A History of Shrewsbury School*, 22.

³⁷ Margaret M. Kay, *A History of Rivington and Blackrod School* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1931, repr. 1966), 173; Cox, *John Deane's School, Northwich*, 37-8; Orme, *Medieval Schools*, 288.

³⁸ Cox, *John Deane's School Northwich*, 38; Orme, "An Early-Tudor Oxford Schoolbook", 34-35.

the congregation, sitting in the real bishop's chair and using the bishop's staff. This licensed role-reversal, inverting a social order where age took precedence over youth, was then followed by the rest of the boys, who took on the roles of the lesser clergy and bishop's servants, collecting money from the surrounding area, to be put towards a feast that day. At St Paul's the Boy Bishop rode on horseback around the City for this purpose, while at York, the boys ventured out into the surrounding countryside and collected a great deal of money. John Colet forbade many of the diversions common to grammar schools of the early sixteenth century, but he required the boys of St Paul's to participate in this ceremony, to hear the Boy Bishop give his sermon and offer him a penny. This was strictly controlled role-reversal, as the ceremony was to last for one day only. It reflected the Biblical tradition of the innocence and humility of children, and how one must have this childlike purity of heart to follow Christ; the themes of bringing down the mighty and proud and raising the meek and humble were present in the Boy Bishop's sermon and the musical portions of the service. It was also a very experiential, hands-on way to learn about the ceremonies of the church.

The Boy Bishop ceremony was abolished in 1541 along with other saints' days which involved a similar element of misrule, such as the feasts of St Katharine and St Clement.³⁹ It was revived temporarily under Mary, and abolished a second time under Elizabeth early in her reign. It was 'replaced', in a sense, by the practice of 'barring-out', a custom which survived into the eighteenth century. Though it is unclear when it first began, barring-out was an existing custom by the 1550s. It is mentioned in the statutes for Sir John Deane's School, Northwich; the

³⁹ Duffy, *Stripping of the Altars*, 430-41.

school was founded in 1558 and the statutes made shortly thereafter. The week before Christmas and the week before Easter, the boys were allowed to ‘bar out’ the master; in other words, to literally lock him out of the school.⁴⁰ Christmas and Easter were the two main holidays in the post-Reformation school year, with the calendar of saint’s days having been greatly reduced. The practice of barring-out was first banned at Durham in 1595, but was present throughout the North and Midlands; it was not practised as regularly in the south of England as it was in the north, or on the Continent.⁴¹ Sir John Deane’s statutes state that ‘the great schools’ – Eton, St Paul’s, Winchester – barred out the master, and his school, as in so many other respects, was to consciously follow that practice. The custom of barring-out has been described by Keith Thomas as reaffirming the authoritarian relationship between the master and the students, and never actually challenging the social order. The master was expected to go along with it, his ‘moral influence’ somehow becoming weakened if he suppressed a barring-out.⁴² The wider social hierarchy was ostensibly being reflected in the schoolroom, a subject discussed in the following section, and the boys were being prepared to understand their role in this hierarchy, and misrule of a religious nature, like the Boy Bishop ceremony, no longer had a place in education as it had done prior to the Reformation. This relates closely to the gradual separation, largely initiated by reformed religious ideas, of religion and ‘superstition’, the removal of anything which competed with the efficacy of church ritual and was at odds with church

⁴⁰ Cox, *John Deane’s School, Northwich*, 37.

⁴¹ Thomas, *Rule and Misrule in the Schools of Early Modern England*, (Reading: The Stenton Lecture 1975, 1976), 26, 30.

⁴² Thomas, *Rule and Misrule*, 33-4.

doctrine, or which distracted from the duties of a Christian – a separation, in other words, of religious ritual from the more secular elements of society. When the Boy Bishop ceremony was abolished in 1541, it was because the activities of the boys were ‘rather to the derision than to any true glory of God, or honour of his saints’.⁴³

The ‘killing of flesshe’ forbidden at Blackburn may refer to two diversions held shortly before Lent, on Shrove Tuesday, in which the boys brought a penny, a ‘cock-penny’, to the master or second master for the purchasing of the birds; at Manchester, this would then involve the boys throwing stones at a rooster buried up to its neck, while at other schools it meant cockfighting, which had been a custom at schools just before Lent since at least the twelfth century.⁴⁴ The practice of paying the master this ‘cock-penny’ was forbidden at Manchester Grammar School in 1525, yet was allowed at Warrington Boteler School in 1526.⁴⁵ John Colet in his statutes to St Paul’s School in 1512 strictly forbade cock-fighting, as did Merchant Taylors’ School in 1561, which copied the statutes of St Paul’s nearly word for word in many places. Manchester also forbade cockfighting and ‘other unlawful games’.⁴⁶

⁴³ Duffy, *Stripping of the Altars*, 430-31; see also Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic: Studies in Popular Beliefs in Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century England* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1971), 51; Jean Delumeau, *Catholicism Between Luther and Voltaire: A New View of the Counter-Reformation*, transl. Jeremy Moiser (London: Burns & Oates, 1977), 175-227, for this process of separation in the French context.

⁴⁴ Orme, *Medieval Schools*, 157-8.

⁴⁵ Cheshire RO, SL382/18/1, Warrington Boteler foundation deed; “Manchester School rules, 1525”, in Carlisle, *Concise Description*, I, 676.

⁴⁶ “St Paul’s School statutes”, in Carlisle, *Concise Description*, II, 75; “Merchant Taylors’ School statutes, 1561”, in Carlisle, *Concise Description*, II, 55; “Manchester School rules”, in Carlisle, *Concise Description*, I, 680.

Other diversions from the usual timetable were of a more academic nature. Some schools held ‘disputations’, perhaps once a year, usually with a prize to the best students. Disputations and declamations, on a morally edifying theme set by the master, were held during the week as regular practice in oratory, in a similar manner to reading an act of a play every week, as at Shrewsbury, but sometimes they might be public. Ruthin School, in 1574, was to have yearly ‘public Disputations’, the prize being either a book, or the honour of being captain or head boy of one’s class. They began at noon every 17 November (Accession Day), and the boys were required to give the master one penny towards buying the prize books. There was also a competition for writing at Ruthin, with a silver pen, ‘in token of Victory’, as the prize.⁴⁷ John Colet was somewhat unusual in not allowing the boys of St Paul’s to participate in ‘disputing at Saint Bartilimewe’, or, at St Bartholomew’s fair every 24 August, as other London schools did, dismissing it as ‘but foolish babling, and losse of time’; his was a fairly uncommon view on the issue of practising Latin through declamation and disputation, although perhaps it was only the public nature of the disputations of which he disapproved.⁴⁸

Morals and Punishments

The moral standards expected of the schoolmaster have already been discussed in the previous chapter, with reference to the ideals expressed in statutes

⁴⁷ “Ruthin School rules”, in Sylvester, ed., *Education Documents*, 115-16.

⁴⁸ “St Paul’s School statutes”, in Carlisle, *Concise Description*, II, 75.

and foundation charters. School rules give us a good idea of what was expected of the boys in the classroom. At Ruthin school in 1574, the master and usher were not only to teach the boys ‘the manner of apprehending speaking and writing’ but also how to worship God ‘religiously’, to ‘humbly obey their Parents’ and to show ‘due Deference’ to their elders and social superiors. The boys were to be ‘clean decent and modest’ in all things, including both body and clothing, and were to behave themselves not just while at school but also in town and while playing, thus giving the school a good reputation, but also reinforcing the school’s role in monitoring the behaviour of the boys. The prayers at the start of the day were given in the church, and not in the classroom, so it was particularly important for the boys to behave themselves in public. Older boys were appointed by the master as monitors or moderators, who were to bring badly behaved boys to the attention of the master. There were to be two such monitors in the school, two in church, and three in the streets and fields, thus monitoring the boys’ behavior inside and outside the classroom; Manchester Grammar School had a similar system. The Ruthin master was to ‘examine’ the boys’ faults every Monday morning at nine o’clock: he was to make a speech, exhorting the boys to virtue, reproving any disgraceful actions or slothfulness, or persuading them ‘to Diligence and Industry’. There was to be moderation in physical punishment, however, with no hitting the boys on the ears, eyes, nose, or face.⁴⁹

The practice of corporal punishment in the classroom is an important theme in understanding medieval and early modern attitudes towards children, and how formal education reflected these attitudes; it also underlies many

⁴⁹ “Ruthin School rules”, in Sylvester, ed., *Educational Documents*, 112.

contemporaries' views of the schoolroom as being nothing like John Brinsley's description of the '*ludus literarius*'. Schoolboys were being prepared both to experience authority, and to exercise it later in life. The classroom was another hierarchy, another microcosm of the wider social structure, mirroring and overlapping it in a similar way to the household. Outside the classroom, the schoolmaster did not hold much weight socially, but within the classroom, he was expected to enforce the authority he held in that context.⁵⁰ In many images of schoolmasters from this period, the master is depicted in his chair (he was the only person who had an actual chair, rather than a bench), at the front of the room, like the head of a household or the lord of a manor, teaching from that position; the boys were called up to him, he did not go to them. Images of schoolmasters often showed them holding a rod or a birch, more commonly the latter, like a 'badge of office'; school seals, for instance, will sometimes depict a schoolmaster and his students, sometimes with the master in the act of punishing one of them, as on the seal for Louth (1552), or simply carrying a rod, as on the seals for Blackburn (1567), and Oakham and Uppingham (1584).⁵¹

Some parents might complain about beating, about the arbitrary standards and endless repetition and punishments for small faults, but it was the accepted method for punishing bad behavior, failure to learn one's schoolwork, or not speaking Latin in the classroom. Corporal punishment is stressed frequently in the moralizing literature of the period, but this does not necessarily mean it was firmly entrenched in practice. It was emphasized because the writers thought

⁵⁰ Griffiths, Fox, and Hindle, eds., *Experience of Authority*, introduction, 3.

⁵¹ Orme, *Medieval Schools*, 144; school seals are reproduced in Carlisle, *Concise Description*, I, 822, 636; II, 323.

masters and parents were not harsh enough in chastising their children, especially rich mothers who were far too indulgent with their sons, ruining the effects of the discipline imparted by the schoolmaster.⁵² Children were viewed as the ‘limbs of Satan’, tainted by original sin despite their youth, and were to be civilised by force if necessary; the Book of Proverbs approved this. Young people were meant to be prepared for service in the adult world; youth was a ‘dark age’, and the young ‘easily if not naturally slipped into disorder’ – they had to be set onto a virtuous path while still young.⁵³

‘Moralists’ thought this, but it is less clear if everyone followed this line of thinking. John Brinsley described the birch rod as sanctified by God for correction, and it was certainly used, we have too much evidence to say otherwise, but there were some who opposed (excessive) beating: Roger Ascham, Erasmus, and even some schoolmasters, all saw it as a last resort only for very badly-behaved boys. Ascham wrote in *The Scholemaster* that the many masters ‘punishe rather, the weakenes of nature, than the fault of the Scholer’.⁵⁴ It is more likely to have been associated with certain teachers at certain schools (Nicholas Udall and William Malym at Eton, for instance). One of Ascham’s dinner companions in the preface to *The Scholemaster* declared that ‘the best Scholemaster of our time, was the greatest beater’ – he was referring to the 1560s, and the schoolmaster in

⁵² Orme, *Medieval Children* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2001), 85.

⁵³ Paul Griffiths, “Masterless Young People in Norwich, 1560-1645”, in Griffiths, Fox, and Hindle, eds., *Experience of Authority*, 148, 151.

⁵⁴ Ascham, *The Scholemaster*, preface to the reader, sig. Bi v.

question is believed to have been William Malym, the headmaster of Eton and one of Nicholas Udall's former pupils.⁵⁵

Beating could be administered for bad behavior or for not understanding one's schoolwork, implying that it was more frequently used in the lower forms before those 'unapt to learn' had been weeded out. The idea of encouraging competition between the boys to induce them to learn was sometimes borrowed from the continent, and was a common practice at Jesuit schools, as we will see shortly.⁵⁶ The voices in opposition to beating were mainly from humanist scholars, such as Erasmus and Vives, speaking from a humanist point of view, without any confessional differences; Montaigne in his *On the Education of Children* advanced similar criticism of corporal punishment in education. Even John Stockwood, master of Tonbridge School in the 1570s, for all his extreme views of the moral corruption of classical texts, favoured a moderate view of beating, arguing in a sermon of 1578 that 'some of you, thinke over muche gentlenesse to be the way, and others continual and tyrannical scourgyng and whypping to be the way, whereas in deed you are both sortes far and wide out of the waye. For the one with too much levities encourageth them to a lewd licenciousnesse and loosenesse of maners: the others thinking by cruell and butcherly beatyng to wynde reformation, ingender in them such a mislike and lothyng of learning'.⁵⁷ Criticism of excessive correction also occurred well before

⁵⁵ Ascham, *The Scholemaster*, preface to the reader, sig. Bi v; Stephen Wright, 'William Malym (1533-1594)', *ODNB*, accessed 21 November 2011.

⁵⁶ Green, *Humanism and Protestantism*, 93-95.

⁵⁷ Stockwood, *Sermon Preached at Paules Crosse...1578*, 89.

this period, for instance in the statutes for Winchester college (1400), and for Eton College (1440), which both call for moderation in punishment.⁵⁸

Early modern England had a very young population – it is estimated that in 1600 approximately forty per cent of the population was under the age of twenty-one – so bringing up children was an important concern, lest they ‘impede both their own spiritual development and the running of an orderly Christian commonwealth’.⁵⁹ The discipline of the schoolroom was meant to curb youthful spontaneity and wild behaviour.⁶⁰ Obeying one’s parents was a duty to God, as was all obedience to authority from the middle ages into the early modern period. A degree of reciprocity was expected, however, and parents were expected to find a balance between cruelty and indulgence; to chastise one’s children was to make them chaste or pure, the point of such discipline, but not to do so in an excessively violent manner.⁶¹

In a court case of the 1390s in Kent, a man was accused of assaulting a boy: he was not punished because he claimed to be the boy’s schoolmaster. In Cambridge in the sixteenth century, when the degree of Master of Grammar was conferred, a boy was given 4d. to be ‘ceremonially’ beaten so the new graduate could show off his disciplinary skills.⁶² These anecdotes seem perverse to the modern mind, but in the sixteenth century it was considered acceptable, and had

⁵⁸ Orme, *Medieval Schools*, 146; this was repeated at Winchester in 1547, with ‘no excessive correction’ to be given to the scholars, and by no one but the master, usher, or warden. “Injunctions Given to Winchester College by the Commissioners of King Edward VI”, in Carlisle, *Concise Description*, II, 458.

⁵⁹ J.A. Sharpe, “Disruption in the Well-Ordered Household: Age, Authority, and Possessed Young People”, in Griffiths, Fox, and Hindle, eds., *Experience of Authority*, 188.

⁶⁰ Thomas, *Rule and Misrule*, 8.

⁶¹ Orme, *Medieval Children*, 82-4.

⁶² Orme, *Medieval Schools*, 146.

been so for centuries before: parents, husbands, masters, employers, officials of the law, and schoolmasters, anyone in authority, might use physical punishment, and despite some criticism, discussed below, it was accepted practice. Schoolboys, naturally, lived in fear of the master's rod: 'I fere the rodde as the swerde', reads an exercise in an Oxford schoolbook from the 1490s. The schoolmaster's perspective on the matter, from the same book, reads: 'there is nothyng that I desire more than to use softe and easye correccioun unto the scholars if I coulde thynke it wolde most profyt them. but sum wolde never lurne yf thei wer sure thei sholde never be bett, and that may be provede, that onn weekes sufferance without betynge hurte them more than thei profytede ij before'. Elsewhere in the same book, a boy tells his master that he fears being beaten, to be told that if he behaves himself and learns his grammar, he will be fine.⁶³

These two answers from the schoolmaster's perspective give two reasons why beating might be used in the classroom. The first is that active use of the rod was thought to be the only way to force boys to learn, because the more lenient alternative did not work; the second is that the birch need not be used at all if the boys behaved and made an effort with their studies. The latter is similar to the humanist opinion, that beating should only be used as a last resort. A century later, the playwright Thomas Nashe declared in *A Pleasant Comedie Called Summers Last Will and Testament* that all the schoolmaster's beatings couldn't make him learn, and that 'nouns and pronouns, I pronounce you as traitors to boys' buttocks' – this despite the fact that Nashe himself is believed to have received his

⁶³ Nelson, *A Fifteenth-Century Schoolbook*, 28, 34-5, 28.

education outside of the grammar school context.⁶⁴ The image of the schoolboy living in fear of the master's rod, or hating school because of the punishments received there, remained a common one throughout this period.

On the Continent, however, we see a different picture. The Jesuit schools, for instance, do not seem to have placed the same emphasis on beating. Written work was corrected privately, and competition was encouraged between the boys, who were assigned 'rivals' to try and outdo academically.⁶⁵ Schoolwork ought to be 'not only useful but also pleasant and attractive, so that the enjoyment that they bring might more deeply inspire the members' interest in their studies' - English schools might agree in theory, but not in practice.⁶⁶ The Jesuits approach to punishment accords more closely with humanist pedagogical theory. Early humanists like Erasmus were opposed to beating because it induced students to hate, rather than love, learning; for the humanists, the function of the school was to foster this love of learning in its students. Erasmus and Vives believed that only slaves altered their behavior through fear of punishment, while a good subject (or in this case, a good student) would do so through encouragement and training.⁶⁷

In the French context, Montaigne's *On the Education of Children* also criticized corporal punishment on the grounds that it drove children to hate learning; he also believed that excessive punishment desensitized a child to correction: 'Away with this violence! away with this compulsion! than which, I certainly believe nothing more dulls and degenerates a well-descended nature. If

⁶⁴ Charles Nicholl, *A Cup of News: The Life of Thomas Nashe* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1984), 19.

⁶⁵ Pavur, ed., *Ratio Studiorum*, 143.

⁶⁶ Pavur, ed., *Ratio Studiorum*, 215.

⁶⁷ Bushnell, *A Culture of Teaching*, 29-31.

you would have him apprehend shame and chastisement, do not harden him to them [harden him instead to things he should despise]'. In other words, let what is good, i.e. learning, be made appealing, lest a school become a 'house of correction of imprisoned youth'.⁶⁸ In practice, however, English grammar schools were humanist in curriculum, but not in terms of their schoolmaster's attitude towards punishment. One wonders why a grammar school was sometimes called a '*ludus literarius*' in Latin, or 'house of play and pleasure', if beating was such an accepted practice there? This was the ancient name for a grammar school; had medieval schools lost sight of this original name? Perhaps the moderate humanist views on beating harked back to the original meaning of '*ludus literarius*'.

Who Were The Scholars?

By 1520, the term 'scholar' had come to mean a civilised, polite, honest, and sober person: this definition comes from the founder of Bruton Grammar School, Richard FitzJames. A schoolboy was defined, and noticeable, by his good behavior as much as by the fact that he studied Latin grammar.⁶⁹

In general, the boys who attended grammar school were from the middling sort; the very poor would not have attended, as this type of education was not useful to them and their families could not afford to send them off to school for so long, while the very rich were generally taught at home by private tutors. The boys would have been between about age seven and fourteen, though in some

⁶⁸ Michel de Montaigne, "On the Education of Children", in *Essays of Michael Seigneur de Montaigne in Three Books...Made English by Charles Cotton* (M. Gillyflower, 1693), 253-54, EEBO.

⁶⁹ Thomas, *Rule and Misrule*, 6.

cases they were older, staying on until they were ready for university. Depending on the statutes for the school, they might be from the local area, or from elsewhere; often statutes would say that the boys were to be from the parish of the school only, and if ‘foreigners’ were allowed in, from other towns or counties, it was only if there was room for them, and only for a fee. St Paul’s was open to boys from anywhere in England, while other schools might specify boys from a particular parish, county, or lands owned by the school.

It is possible to make generalizations about the social makeup of the grammar school students, but it is very rare to know anything about specific boys; unless they are particularly well-known figures of the early modern period, and we have biographical evidence for their education or they wrote about it themselves, we know very little about the boys in the grammar schools as individual students. University matriculation records will sometimes indicate which school a boy went to, and sometimes what his father did, giving us some idea of what background he came from and indicating that he went from grammar school to university. A sample of thirty-one matriculation records for Gonville and Caius college from 1621, and further thirty from other Cambridge colleges between 1570 and 1647 indicate that most of the students had come from grammar schools (only four being listed as privately educated), and while there were a small handful of knights’ and esquires’ sons, most were the sons of yeoman, gentlemen, and ministers; only a few were sons of tradesmen or husbandmen.⁷⁰

⁷⁰ “Gonville and Caius College admissions, 1621”, in Cressy, *Education in Tudor and Stuart England*, 128-31; J.A. Venn, *Alumni Cantabrigienses – Part I: From the Earliest Times to 1751* (10 vols., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1922-54), II.

Among the earliest extant class lists, however, compiled on admission to the school, are those of Shrewsbury School from 1562, and of Rivington Grammar School, Lancashire, from 1575-6. The Rivington list will be examined first. Composed in Latin, it contains one hundred and fourteen names of boys from the Lancashire area. They came largely from the families of knights, gentlemen, yeomen, or husbandmen, and despite the very anti-Catholic nature of the school's statutes, some were from recusant Catholic families. No ages are given, and the statutes do not place any restrictions on the ages of entrance to the school, although the youngest students would be between about five and seven years old.⁷¹ Some appear to have been siblings, or relatives in some degree. Twenty of these boys went on to university, to Brasenose College if they went to Oxford, and of these twenty, there are twelve about whom we have any detailed information. Two were the nephews of the founder, James Pilkington. They both became clergymen. One Edward Charnock entered university at the age of thirteen in 1579 (making him nine when the list was compiled), and may have gone on to found a grammar school himself. The other boys went on to enter law, the church, and, in one case, medicine, but mainly the church. Two more are listed as becoming school governors, but not what their main occupation would have been, while another, Francis Rivington, was from a local lordly family, and may have been a second son, as he took a BA 1584, but there is no detail on what he went on to do after that. One of the older boys on the list, Robert Anderton, aged about fifteen when the list was made, entered Brasenose College at age eighteen, and later went to Douai, to become a priest, and, just after his ordination at age

⁷¹ Kay, *Rivington and Blackrod School*, 40-42.

twenty-four, he returned to England, and was martyred. Rivington Grammar School, then, did not always produce Protestant clerics as the founder would have wished.⁷²

The Shrewsbury list shows a similar pattern: most of the names on this list are unfortunately just names, but for those few about whom we do know anything about their later lives, most became clergymen, or took on public roles as members of Parliament or Speakers in the House of Commons. One joined the Jesuits and became a priest, as at Rivington.⁷³ The grammar schools' purpose of training their students to fill roles in the church or government was mostly fulfilled in these students, but of course one needs more such school lists to make any real conclusions; including those schoolboys who became well-known figures in the history of this period would help increase the number of examples but it might also distort the evidence in favour of those who were unusually successful after finishing their education.

Attending a grammar school was not necessarily a mark of one's social standing, but it did have some bearing on one's place in the social hierarchy. As will be discussed later, the experience of attending grammar school was one shared by boys well down into the middle of the social ladder. But were they in school to improve, or to polish, or to perpetuate, their social standing? Of these three, the last is the most likely. While in theory, places in school were not confined to the social elite, and could allow boys from humble backgrounds to improve their chances in life, this was not always the case in practice, as will be

⁷² Kay, *Rivington and Blackrod School*, 43-44.

⁷³ Oldham, *A History of Shrewsbury School*, 286-9.

discussed in Chapter Seven, so boys were not necessarily attending school in order to move up the social ladder. This is not to say that there was no degree of upward mobility, but it was limited social mobility, and not an opportunity that was open to the very poor – Shakespeare, for instance, ‘moved up’ socially, but he was not from a poor family to begin with. Marlowe, similarly, moved up from being the son of a literate shoemaker to being in a position, because of his university education, to potentially enter the clergy. Education could move someone from the level of an artisan to the level of a clergyman, for instance, but was unlikely to allow upward social movement from further down the social scale, or upwards to a rank above the level of the professions. One might become more successful socially and financially, in other words, but still be contained within the middling sort. This sense of upward mobility, however limited it could be in practice, was a significant element within a humanist education. Receiving a Latin education conferred on one a new social status defined by one’s education. Regardless of whether a grammar school boy remained a member of the middling sort, he was, having received a humanist education, a member of an elite, exclusive culture, from which most people were excluded. That shared education, that knowledge of the same classical authors and texts, and that training according to humanist ideals, shared by those who had attended a grammar school, allowed its recipients to use that education to mark themselves out from everyone else who had not received it.

The sons of the gentry and nobility were entering the universities, and some of the wealthier grammar schools, towards the end of the sixteenth century partially for the education, and partially for the connections to be made and the

social ‘polish’ to be gained there – for a small proportion of schoolboys, then, this was the purpose of a grammar school, but it was more commonly the purpose of attending university. Perpetuating, or maintaining, one’s social standing, however, was one advantage of attending a grammar school. The education received there by boys whose parents were able to afford their education would allow those boys to pursue a career appropriate to their social station, a career which would allow them to do the best they could within their place in the social hierarchy. Education could, in practice, involve a degree of upward social mobility, but it did not automatically equal social mobility for just anyone, and for those who did advance socially, it was not necessarily a large step up.⁷⁴

The experience of the schoolboy, then, altered between the late fifteenth and early seventeenth centuries. The influence of humanist ideals and Reformation rules were all factors in this shift from *vulgaria* to classical examples, from the Boy Bishop ceremony to barrings-out. There was no decisive moment when this change began to occur, and no definite sense that the diversions found within a school diminished over the course of this period – John Colet was forbidding play-days and public disputations as early as 1512 – but a gradual shift is present over the century. The humanist concern with learning and speaking the most correct Latin possible, according to classical standards, led to a greater emphasis on disputations and declamations, though plays did not give way to disputations as practice in oratory, but rather both were used to practice the skills of rhetoric. The methods of punishment used in the classroom, such an

⁷⁴ Cressy, “Educational Opportunity”, 304; David Riggs, *The World of Christopher Marlowe* (London: Faber and Faber, 2004), 60.

omnipresent terror to the schoolboy, remained fairly consistent across the century; criticism of, or support for, excessive beating was not divided along religious lines. The learning experience became more standardized, with the same grammar textbook used in all schools, and the methods of teaching grammar became less concerned with capturing the boys' attention, and more concerned with the quality and morality of the Latin being taught. The later middle ages saw some shared sense of knowledge from a school experience, but this shared educational experience would become much more uniform and recognizable in the sixteenth century, particularly with the standard textbooks and methods of organization upon which schools were established. Fewer religious holidays led to fewer days off, but also changed the way in which the boys participated in church, regulating them to visiting for the sermons only, rather than being included in services. The students' relationship to the church, discussed in the following chapter, became less participatory and more passive, as any frivolity or misrule moved to the secular elements of education, which were kept much more separate from religious instruction as the sixteenth century progressed.

CHAPTER 5

RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION

Our approach to early modern education, and its similarities with, and differences from, medieval education has now become more nuanced than simply viewing the Reformation as reviving interest in education. As we have seen, the priorities of a newly ‘Protestantizing’ England adapted and expanded an existing and successful network of grammar schools, rather than establishing such a network from nothing, but the religious changes which were brought about during the Reformation were nonetheless responsible for many of the significant changes to education which occurred in this period. Humanism, print, and the need for more educated state administrators are important factors in the changes and continuities in education which we see in the early modern period, but the concern with implementing Protestantism and erasing pre-Reformation Catholicism which emerged in the late 1530s was of enormous importance in changing the approaches to education which were taken by the English government, and significantly altered the church’s relationship to education. The instruction in religion which the boys in the grammar schools received also changed, becoming at once more urgent and monitored by authority, but also more separate from the rest of the curriculum, running alongside grammatical instruction, but not comprising it.

Chapter One has already demonstrated that the curricula of English grammar schools in this period was overwhelmingly classical in content, despite the ostensibly religious aims, presented in Chapter Two, of many grammar school

founders. But we cannot ignore religious instruction in any study of early modern education, and it was most certainly present in the grammar schools, though taking up far less space in the timetable than Latin grammar and rhetoric. This chapter will outline the various methods by which religious instruction was received within a grammar school. After a discussion of the place of such instruction within the curriculum more broadly and the new role of religious uniformity in education, each method of religious instruction will be examined in turn: the catechism, visits to church on Sundays and holidays, as well as the prayers which were said every day in the school. Finally, the practice of religious instruction in English schools will be compared to that of Catholic Italy and Lutheran Germany, to highlight the differences in such teaching in different confessional contexts.

Background – Religious Instruction and State Involvement Therein

While religious education was an important part of the grammar school experience, most basic religious instruction was received before a boy even began grammar school. During the Middle Ages, a child's religious instruction was the responsibility of his or her godparents, as well as the parish clergy, and was intended to prepare the child for confirmation. Grammar education had been largely meant to prepare a boy for one day joining the clergy. Boys were still prepared for this role after the Reformation by attending grammar school, but the way in which they received their religious education was different. Broadly speaking, there was a shift in the early sixteenth century from religious education

at home, to that which took place in church by the 1530s, to the enforced religious instruction in schools after the Royal Injunctions of 1571.¹ A similar pattern is visible in France, described by Jean Delumeau, although it seems to have occurred during the seventeenth century, whereby the need for catechetical instruction was met first by priests, but was later reinforced in schools, 'primary schools' which taught 'both religion and human letters', with the schoolmaster teaching the catechism twice a week in a similar manner to English grammar schools.² Religious education was present in schools before the 1530s, and the clergy had voluntarily taught children alongside their religious duties, but it became a formal requirement once the process of reformation began. In 1536 the clergy were required to inform children in the faith, their responsibilities in this capacity increasing over the following decade and a half, and by 1571 this became part of the schoolmaster's duty. After the 1530s, 'schools and universities were enlisted either in the cause of reform or to uphold the established order', with schoolmasters required to announce the royal supremacy in 1534 to their schools, just as the clergy were required to announce it to their congregations, as uniformity in religious education became more pressing and potentially more difficult to enforce.³ This uniformity could be used in the service of reformed or traditional religion: as the church moved closer to being under the control of the state, so did education. This is the case in other parts of Europe in the sixteenth

¹ A shift discussed, the case of England, in both Orme, *Medieval Schools*, 291-96, and Green, *Humanism and Protestantism*, 268-74.

² Delumeau, *Catholicism Between Luther and Voltaire*, 199-202.

³ Orme, *Medieval Schools*, 296; Simon, *Education and Society in Tudor England*, 124.

century – in Lutheran Germany in particular, and most pertinently here, in England.

At the beginning of the sixteenth century, as they had been during the middle ages, parents and godparents were required, at a child's baptism, to keep the child safe, and ensure that the child knew the Lord's Prayer, the Ave Maria, and the Creed, to prepare the child for confirmation. Petty schools, or reading and song schools, did teach the basic elements of the Christian faith: prayers, graces, psalms and antiphons were used as basic reading texts, and even the alphabet was known as the 'Christ Cross Row' as it was recited like a prayer, with the sign of the cross at the start and 'amen' at the end. But once a boy entered a grammar school, this basic religious instruction was largely behind him: while religious instruction played a more prominent role in the petty schools, in the grammar schools it was pushed to the edges of the humanist, classical, curriculum, saved for morning and evening prayers, trips to church, and Saturday afternoon study of the catechism.⁴ Now a boy would be expected to attend church with his school, and be tested on the sermon. The catechism would still make an appearance in the grammar school curriculum, but there would be far fewer other Christian texts from which to learn Latin, and more emphasis on classical literature. St Paul's School in 1512 had a priest, or 'chapelyn', who taught the children the articles of the faith, as well as the Ten Commandments in English, from the 'Catechyzon' written by Colet himself. St Paul's seems to have done this only for the youngest

⁴ Baldwin, *Shakspeare's Petty School*, 85.

students, and it was rare for a school to have its own priest teaching the catechism; usually the schoolmaster did this himself.⁵

A boy would learn the basics of the Christian faith early on in his formal education, but there was disagreement about how much doctrine he should learn, and when. Among the ‘godly’, it was believed that the earlier this instruction was given, the better. The more traditional opinion was not to teach too much doctrine too soon. The middling opinion was that confirmation was the age at which such instruction should take place, which, since it occurred between the ages of twelve and fourteen, might take place during a boy’s years in a grammar school.⁶ This would imply that religious instruction should, and would, continue to take place in school even after much had already been learned in a petty school or at home.

The general improvement of education was not strictly a Protestant concern, and certainly not one new in the sixteenth century.⁷ What made the Protestant concern with education so particularly ‘new’ was its concern with uniformity.⁸ In the case of uniformity of grammar teaching, this was something that gradually, and partially, came about through certain school founders and masters imitating and adopting what other schools were teaching, and through Lily’s *Grammar* becoming the official grammar textbook; Lily’s text became standard in 1540, while the similarities between school curricula began earlier still and became more pronounced after the mid-sixteenth century.⁹ Religious

⁵ “St Paul’s School Statutes”, in Carlisle, *Concise Description*, II, 74.

⁶ Green, *Humanism and Protestantism*, 273-74.

⁷ Orme, *Medieval Schools*, 291.

⁸ Orme, *Medieval Schools*, 292.

⁹ Orme, *Magdalen College and its School*, ch. 4 “The Magdalen Diaspora”, 51-67; Baldwin, *Shakspeare’s Small Latine*, I, 164-84, 285-320.

uniformity was something which was imposed from the top down, however. The English state was creating a more ‘practically enforceable stress on religious unity’ than before.¹⁰ When implementing this uniformity initially, the authorities addressed the issue of one uniform grammar textbook, and not that of religious instruction, in 1525. Their concern was ostensibly about the diversity of the grammar texts used in schools throughout the country, which made it difficult, if a boy had to change schools due to an outbreak of disease, for instance, for him to carry on with his education if different schools were using different textbooks. In terms of promoting the new faith, the most important branches of education were law and theology, and it was to them that the crown first directed its attention. Grammar schools were initially seen as much less important in this regard so they were largely overlooked; when education was affected it was inadvertently, as when a tax on clergy in 1534, to evaluate clerical revenues, resulted in diminished salaries for those chantry priests who also taught school, and this by extension lowered the quality of teachers who could be found.¹¹ As this example illustrates, religious education, and education in general, was only indirectly affected by official policy at first.

A schoolmaster was first commended by the testimonies of other men, concerning his religion and moral conduct, and once this was ascertained and deemed sufficient, he was required to swear to the Royal Supremacy and the Thirty-Nine Articles. This allowed him to teach anywhere within the diocese in

¹⁰ Collinson, “The Monarchical Republic of Queen Elizabeth I”, in *Elizabethan Essays* (London: Hambledon, 1994), 229.

¹¹ Orme, *Medieval Schools*, 298-99.

which he had been licensed. Subsequent visitations of the school inquired as to whether the schoolmaster be

diligent in teaching, sound in religion, and what authors he doth read unto his youth, and whether that upon Sundays and Holy Days he exerciseth his youth in the catechism and in reading and in expounding some part of the Scripture; and whether there be any in your parish that hath any schoolmaster suspected in religion, and who they are, and what is the schoolmaster's name, and whether he be authorized to teach.¹²

The focus was largely on whether the schoolmaster was teaching orthodox doctrine, and using Lily's *Grammar*, and an officially approved catechism, such as Nowell's after 1570. Official interest was taken in the progress of the students as well, with an eye to their joining the clergy one day: after 1571, schoolmasters were annually to 'signifie to the Byshop, what chosen scholars they have of all their number, which are of that aptnes, and so forward in learning, that there may be good hope they will become fitte, either forthe common wealth, or for the holy ministerie. By this hope the parents beyng allured, will more willingly keepe them at schole'.¹³

But once the preoccupation with uniformity and conformity in religion became more systematically enforced, it was not confined to the Protestant church of England; while the contribution towards education made under Edward VI and Elizabeth I were certainly of great significance, educational developments and continuities during Mary's reign are often overlooked in the history of English education in this period. Yet Mary was just as concerned as her Protestant siblings

¹² "Freke's Articles for Rochester Diocese, 1572-74", in *Visitation Articles and Injunctions of the Period of the Reformation*, ed. W.H. Frere and W.W.M. Kennedy (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1910), 342. The articles for other dioceses, such as Worcester (1569), London (1571), and York (1571), contain similar material.

¹³ Church of England, *A Booke of Certaine Canons*, 26.

with examining schoolmasters for their religious orthodoxy; in her case, of course, they were examined for their commitment to the Catholic faith, and her instructions to the clergy in 1554 stated that for any schoolmasters found to be ‘suspect in any ways, to remove them and place Catholic men in their rooms, with a special commandment to instruct their children, so as they may be able to answer the priest at the mass, and so help the priest to mass as hath been accustomed’, but the same principle applied in Mary’s reign as it did later in the sixteenth century, that of ensuring that the religion of England’s schoolmasters was in line with the official religion. Her legislation extended both to ‘seditious priests’ and schoolmasters.¹⁴ The Articles for London diocese, drawn up in 1554, sound very similar to those of twenty years later: their language is somewhat different, exhorting schoolmasters to ‘cause their scholars to fast, to pray, to serve God, and to fear Him, to come often to the church to hear mass and all other Divine Service, and to honour and reverence any person according to his vocation and degree’. But the master here was still required to take his scholars to church, to be responsible for their behaviour there and to ensure that they were partaking of the services of the official church. These articles also become quite specific, referring to a Latin grammar of 1552 which contained only two sacraments – had any printer in St Paul’s churchyard in that year printed such a book? Did the schoolmaster ‘teach and instruct any his scholars in any point of heresy’, concerning the articles of the faith, the ten commandments, or the sacraments? Did any schoolmaster ‘teach or read to their scholars any evil or naughty corrupt

¹⁴ A.C.F. Beales, *Education Under Penalty: English Catholic Education From the Reformation to the Fall of James II 1547-1689*, (London: Athlone Press, 1963), 20; “Queen Mary’s Articles, 1554”, in Frere and Kennedy, *Visitation Articles and Injunctions*, 328.

books, ballad, or writing, or do interpret or set forth unto any of them the New Testament in English or Latin, or any other books English or Latin, concerning Scripture, not expedient for young children to meddle withall?’

An act of Parliament in Mary’s reign also gave her the power to make new statutes for schools founded or re-founded during the previous two reigns; Mary certainly issued letters patent for the grammar schools at Ripon, Market Drayton in Shropshire, and of the Horse-fair School in York, on the site of a suppressed hospital.¹⁵ The Protestant use of education to enforce Protestant uniformity ended up being more influential than Catholic regulation of education in England, but it is of great significance that Mary, often overlooked in studies of sixteenth-century education, was just as concerned as her siblings with enforcing the religious orthodoxy of grammar school masters. She did not necessarily initiate this concern, since an Oath of Supremacy had been a requirement under Henry VIII and a standard catechism had been prescribed under Edward VI, but the examination of schoolmasters for their religious orthodoxy which was such an important feature of Elizabeth’s reign can in fact be traced to Mary’s reign.¹⁶

There were certainly problems with implementing uniformity via the schoolmaster’s instruction: many people, especially in the north of England, did not see the religious settlement of 1559 as being permanent, and thought there would be a return to the old faith. Former priests, and clergy ordained before 1559, were still serving well into the Elizabethan period, and expressing their traditional Catholic views, such as the curate of Guisborough, who claimed that

¹⁵ Orme, *Medieval Schools*, 330-31; Borthwick RGS/A/1/4, Ripon Grammar School charter; RGS/F/1/1, document concerning former chantry lands to be given to Ripon School; Carlisle, *Concise Description*, II, 347-9, 920.

¹⁶ Beales, *Education Under Penalty*, 17-27; Orme, *Medieval Schools*, 331.

the pope was the head of the church in 1575.¹⁷ These conservative views would certainly clash with the instruction in the official faith which the schoolmaster was providing in his classroom. The old Catholic clergy dying off, and being replaced with new, younger, clergy, trained in the Protestant faith, was supposed to weaken the hold of Catholicism on those conservative areas, and was certainly a motive for ensuring that boys, future clergy, understood the doctrines and rites of the new official religion.

Instruction In the Official Religion

The foundation documents for many grammar schools will state that they were founded specifically for the purpose of religious instruction – while this is not literally true of their curricula and tends to be part of the standard rhetoric of the foundation documents, it was accurate, particularly for later foundations, in the sense of teaching students the correct, official, faith, though *not* in the sense of founding a strictly religious school. Several bishops and archbishops founded schools in this period, particularly in the north of England; they were committed to religious reform, and would see this carried out through education. Alarmed at the religious ignorance of the North, Robert Holgate, Edwin Sandys, Edmund Grindal, and James Pilkington were all involved in founding and endowing schools for the edification of young people in the newly established religion. The statutes for their schools are particularly detailed sources for the religious instruction provided in grammar schools between the 1540s and the 1580s.

¹⁷ Haigh, “The Church of England, the Catholics and the People”, 237-8.

Robert Holgate and Edwin Sandys, Archbishops of York in the 1540s and 1580s respectively, left detailed instructions in the statutes of their schools at York and at Hawkshead, Lancashire, for the religious education of the boys at their schools. Holgate was prior of a house of Gilbertine monks at Watton, East Yorkshire. Holgate was, according to one biographer, drawn towards an ‘academic rather than ascetic’ life.¹⁸ Prior to founding his three free schools in Yorkshire, he had taken a bachelor of divinity at Cambridge in 1524, become Bishop of Llandaff in 1537, and President of the Council of the North in 1538, at a time when the government in the north of England needed strengthening after the Pilgrimage of Grace. He became Archbishop of York in 1545, having been suggested for the role by the Earl of Shrewsbury as it meant he could still remain President of the Council of the North. Holgate was the first bishop to take the oath of supremacy and renounce papal authority – he represented the king both temporally and spiritually.¹⁹ He was involved in the chantry commissions for Yorkshire, though this is not so clearly connected with his interest in promoting education, as the commissioners themselves had no control over what the crown did with the confiscated chantry lands.

Holgate encouraged the clergy and choristers at York Minster to memorize the Scriptures, added works by the Church Fathers, Erasmus, Luther, Calvin, and Bullinger to the Minster’s library, and promoted the Mass and Scripture in the vernacular. He ensured that the clergy were well-prepared to preach, through a sound knowledge of the Bible. Holgate supported several other schools

¹⁸ Dickens, *Robert Holgate Archbishop of York*, 4.

¹⁹ Dickens, *Robert Holgate Archbishop of York*, 18.

financially, in addition to the three he himself founded; he was inclined towards religious reform, but not radically so, preferring the 1549 prayer book to the revised version of 1552, and his moderately reformed religious convictions manifested themselves in his passion for education. His school foundations may therefore be viewed in light of this interest in education.²⁰

Sandys, a Marian exile who had lived in Strasbourg during Mary's reign, was a committed Protestant, and in his capacity as Archbishop of York made great efforts to promote the Protestant faith among the clergy. He was involved in a royal visitation of the north in 1559, and in York he held various synods, conferences and lectures involving the clergy. Sandys had a reputation for his Protestant zeal – he was happy to see images destroyed, learned Hebrew while abroad, and despite being a member of the clergy, married in 1559 while it was still illegal.²¹ His sermons discussed the grace of God and justification through Christ alone, overtly Protestant themes which emerge clearly in the prayers he composed for use in his school. Sandys' school foundation, then, was part of his larger Protestant evangelizing effort, a manifestation of his zealous anti-Catholicism. There are notable similarities between Sandys and other archbishops who founded grammar schools during this period, like Holgate. Sandys was taught at Cambridge by a man with Protestant inclinations, one John Bland, and lived in Strasbourg in the 1550s; early in Elizabeth's reign he was part of a commission assigned to the north of England to remove all traces of Catholic idolatry; while there, he saw the need to reform the clergy and improve their

²⁰ H. L. Parish, 'Holgate, Robert (1481/2–1555)', *ODNB*, accessed 22 November 2011.

²¹ Collinson, 'Sandys, Edwin (1519-1588)', *ODNB*, accessed 18 November 2012.

knowledge and understanding of the Protestant faith, and founded a school near the place of his birth.

These circumstances are nearly identical to those of Archbishop Edmund Grindal, founder of St Bee's free grammar school in Cumbria, an area which Grindal called 'the ignorantest in religion'.²² There had been a priory at St Bee's, Grindal's place of birth, before his school foundation of 1583, where Grindal himself had gone to school; he re-founded this priory as a grammar school. Alarmed at the religious ignorance of the region, he used his episcopal authority to enforce and encourage religious understanding, through education.

The Catechism

Part of the move towards uniformity of instruction was the creation of the Book of Common Prayer in 1549, and with it, an official catechism. This was not the first vernacular catechism used in England, as the 'Lay Folk's Catechism', in translation out of Latin, had been widely used across England since the mid-fourteenth century, in addition to other English-language 'manuals' of Christian instruction which were not strictly catechisms.²³ There had been little in the way of systematic religious instruction in schools, in church, or at home up until the 1520s, but this instruction was to become more dedicated and coordinated after 1537, as it did in Lutheran and Calvinist areas. Bishops Latimer of Worcester, Lee of Coventry and Lichfield, Shaxton of Salisbury, and Veysey of Exeter required

²² F.O. White, *Lives of the Elizabethan Bishops of the Anglican Church*, (London: Skeffington & Son, 1898), 103.

²³ Duffy, *Stripping of the Altars*, 53-55.

parish clergy and chantry priests in 1537-8 to teach the Paternoster, Ave Maria, Ten Commandments, and the Creed, in English. This was still very traditional material, understandable since this was still early on in the English Reformation, yet there was a concern that it be taught by all of the clergy, and that it be taught in English. After 1552, English schoolmasters were required to teach the catechism once a week (the officially approved version, which by that point was still the Prayer Book Catechism of 1549), and, after 1559, teach such sentences from Scripture as would inspire children to 'godliness'.²⁴

Before the introduction of the official Prayer Book Catechism, an English catechism was made in 1548 by Archbishop Cranmer, a translation from a German catechism. This *Catechismus* was illustrated, and it explained, at great length, the Lord's Prayer and the Ten Commandments, as well as the Creed and the sacraments of baptism and the lord's supper.²⁵ Earlier still, John Colet had written a 'Catechyzon', in English, for use at St Paul's around 1512. This was meant to be memorized, and it included, in English, the Apostles' Creed, the Lord's Prayer, the Ave Maria, the Ten Commandments and Seven Sacraments, and three prayers, also in English, on love of God, one's neighbour, and one's self, followed in English by the 'Precepts of living'. Latin prayers followed, to the Virgin and the Child Jesus, as well as the Creed, Lord's Prayer, and Ave Maria, in Latin. This was similar to the French grammar of Despauterius in the 1530s, which contained question and answers, in a similar manner to a catechism, on penitence, sin, and confession, the Creed and Ten Commandments in Latin, as

²⁴ Green, *Humanism and Protestantism*, 268, 271-2, 279.

²⁵ Thomas Cranmer, *Catechismus, That is to Say, A Shorte Instruction into Christian Religion for the Synguler Commoditie and Profyte of Childre[n] and Yong People* (Nicholas Hill, 1548), EEBO.

well as material on the five precepts of the Church, the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit, the eight beatitudes, the four cardinal virtues.

Colet's catechism was still being reprinted in London as late as 1539, as part of the *Paule's Accidence*, or, the grammar book in use at St Paul's School, although it was not a catechism in the strictest sense: it contained basic material such as the Apostles' Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ave Maria, along with the Ten Commandments, seven sacraments, and explanations of the love of God, the self, and one's neighbour, all explained in English, before prayers in Latin to the Virgin Mary and to the child Jesus – to whom the school was dedicated – as well as the Creed, Ave Maria, and Lord's Prayer again, this time in Latin. Yet while the material was presented in a way which was meant for children to understand it, it is not presented in a question-and-answer format.²⁶

Winchester required Erasmus' catechism in 1547; not actually called a catechism, but rather *A Playne and Godly Exposition or Declaration of the Commune Crede...and of the X Commaundements of Goddes Law*, this text discussed the Creed and Ten Commandments at length in the form of a dialogue between teacher and student.²⁷ The catechism of Calvin was popular in the 1560s and 1570s, before the introduction of Nowell's Catechism in 1570.²⁸ From the middle of the century until Nowell's catechism was introduced, the most commonly used catechism in England was the 1549 Prayer Book Catechism, found in the Book of Common Prayer. It was shorter than the catechisms used in

²⁶ Green, *Humanism and Protestantism*, 148; Colet, *Paules Accidence*, sig. A ii r.-A vii r.

²⁷ Desiderius Erasmus, *A Playne and Godly Exposition or Declaration of the Commune Crede (Which in the Latyn Tonge is called Symbolum Apostolorum) and of the X Commaundementes of Goddes Law* (Robert Redman, 1534), EEBO.

²⁸ Baldwin, *Shakspeare's Petty School*, 74-76.

Lutheran or Calvinist schools, and was more cautious than its continental counterparts in terms of its treatment of doctrine; it was more concerned with the basic elements of the faith and what was expected of the ordinary person in church rather than complex explanations of doctrine. It contained the ABC and syllables, the Lord's Prayer and Apostles' Creed, and the Ten Commandments, as well as graces for meals and various prayers. It discussed the basic articles of the faith, what one was meant to learn from the Ten Commandments, how to do one's duty to God and one's neighbors, and how to pray, using the Lord's Prayer, for the grace to follow God's commandments.²⁹

Understanding the Prayer Book catechism was a requirement for entering a grammar school. Knowing how to read was another requirement for many, though not for all, grammar schools, and it would have involved learning short religious texts such as those found in primers or catechisms. It was also required for the ceremony of confirmation. In 1549 parish clergy were required to teach the catechism for half an hour in church before the afternoon Sunday service, at least once every six weeks; this was building on the requirements of 1537-8 when priests had to teach children the basics of the faith, and more indirectly indicates a concern with uniformity, as all children were being taught the same official catechism, the difference from earlier catechism instruction being the fact that now the catechism in use was prescribed by royal authority. In 1552 this instruction was increased to every Sunday and holy day. The clergy, therefore, were not so much concerned with preparing boys for grammar school as with

²⁹ Thomas Cranmer, *The Booke of the Common Praier and Administration of the Sacramentes and Other Rytes and Ceremonies of the Churche, After the Use of the Churche of Englande* (Richard Grafton, 1549), EEBO.

ensuring that children were adequately prepared for confirmation at about the age of fourteen, when they could understand the ceremony.³⁰

Chapter Two has discussed the extent to which grammar schools were monitored and visited and regulated by the church. One might wonder, if education was considered so important to the good of the commonwealth and so vital to enforcing religious policy after the 1530s and 1540s, why so much attention was paid to grammar schools, which only a limited proportion of the people were eligible or able to attend? It is true that church officials, and, nominally, the state, kept a close eye on the grammar schools and those who taught in them: the boys who attended were the ones who could later attend university, and enter the clergy, or become schoolmasters, and be influential in spreading correct religious understanding. But the universities were also monitored for their religious conformity, and while vernacular instruction was less formalized and thus more difficult to regulate, basic religious instruction, received by those who might not attend grammar school, or who were not yet old enough, was also regulated and enforced; the grammar schools were part of a wider process of ensuring religious conformity. In 1562 fines were proposed (yet not implemented in practice) for anyone whose children were older than eight or whose apprentices were older than fourteen and did not know the catechism, and were therefore not ready to be confirmed by the usual age, though this was difficult to enforce in practice, and is indicative of the priority attached to religious uniformity.³¹

³⁰ Orme, *Medieval Children*, 200-01.

³¹ Orme, *Medieval Children*, 219.

While godparents were still instructed at baptisms to see to a child's religious education, the clergy were taking a larger role in this duty, and schoolmasters were now taking greater responsibility for their students' religious instruction, particularly after the Royal Injunctions of 1571. At Sandwich, Kent, in the 1580s, the official catechism was to be read to the boys by the master, and presumably expounded by him also, just as he was to read classical texts aloud to the students. Despite knowing the basic catechism upon entering a grammar school, schoolboys were still tested on it while in school; Saturday afternoons were typically set aside for study of the catechism, for an hour or two, as was the practice at Wakefield in the 1590s.³²

Alexander Nowell's catechism, printed in 1570, was far more detailed than that of 1549, and was meant to be studied after it. Like the earlier catechism, this work does discuss the Ten Commandments, the Creed, and the Lord's Prayer, but breaks each of these down into great detail: each commandment is explained in depth, each part of the Creed is explained, and the Lord's Prayer is dissected in a discussion of how to pray. Even such topics as the trinity, creation, faith, and the division of God's word into law and gospel, are all included, with a description of baptism and communion to finish.³³ Nowell's catechism was far more thorough than the Prayer Book Catechism, moving beyond simple and practical instruction to a deeper understanding of the doctrine of the Church of England. After 1570, study of the Prayer Book catechism was followed by mastering Nowell's catechism, first in English, followed by in Latin or Greek.

³² "Sandwich School Statutes, 1580", in Baldwin, *Shakspeare's Small Latine*, I, 342; Borthwick, Bp. Sch. 46, foundation charter and statutes for Wakefield School.

³³Alexander Nowell, *A Catechisme, or First Instruction and Learning of Christian Religion. Translated Out of Latine into Englishe* (John Day, 1570), EEBO.

Between 1540 and 1570, then, there appeared a number of ‘official’ textbooks used in both grammar and religious instruction, replacing any existing, differing versions: an official Latin grammar book, an official catechism, in various translations and covering different levels of instruction, an official primer, and a semi-official text for teaching Greek, had all been introduced by the end of the century. The study of the catechism, from a basic to an advanced understanding, was controlled all the way along, just as studying Latin was, until the student mastered the material in Lily’s texts. The only texts which did not appear in any ‘official’ version were the classical authors who were studied after mastering the basic grammar: there was a set way to teach grammar, but no standard, approved, way to teach classical literature or rhetoric; while there were commentaries and translations and dictionaries to help understand such works, none of these were officially prescribed. In short, the texts which were under governmental control were in some way concerned with religious instruction as they contained some religious material, right from learning one’s alphabet to learning Latin grammar; Lily’s *Grammar* was of course not strictly a religious text but it did contain some religious instructional material, so it could be included in that category. While the shift towards more uniform texts is relevant to grammar instruction too, the English state was more concerned with controlling *religious* instruction, and with the types of people who were providing such instruction. Monitoring the classical authors in the upper forms of the grammar schools was in practice largely at the discretion of the schoolmaster, and he was licensed anyway, since part of his responsibility included religious instruction.

The impact of print is certainly a factor in this, as it made it much easier to enforce the circulation of a standard text.

The manuscript grammars and books of Latin exercises which were in use at the beginning of this period, in the late fifteenth century, did circulate fairly widely, being copied by schoolmasters and their students and being imitated by schools across the country. The difference in the mid-sixteenth century was that school books, and books of religious instruction, were being printed with the permission of the monarch, by an official printer, and this not only made it easier to circulate the same text to every school, but also allowed the rule that only Lily's *Grammar* and Nowell's Catechism and the other officially prescribed texts should be used to be enforced in a way which would have been much more difficult without the use of print.

The tension between Christian and classical writing, and the potential problems with teaching classical literature in a Christian context have been outlined in Chapter One. Why not have more control over what kinds of classical texts students were exposed to? A possible answer to this is that, while some classical ideas of morality were not compatible with Christian views, there was enough flexibility with those texts to cut out objectionable passages, or find Biblical parallels to classical ideas – religious debate was far more controversial and far more dangerous, and could not be explained away in the same way as passages of classical texts. This would go some way to explaining why it was so important that, when learning the elements of the official religion, young people learned these elements correctly and were not given any room to question them.

Attending Church

Another element of religious instruction which formed part of the grammar school experience was to visit church on Sundays and holidays, to take part in the service and listen to the sermon. Schools were often built near churches, at the edge of the churchyard most commonly, although some might be in the church itself, or in a building next to it. Shrewsbury School paid to have a chapel in nearby St Mary's church fitted out for school use in 1582, and rented it from the church, while at Rivington the school adjoined a chapel established by the founder's father. These visits to church occurred throughout the period covered here, but prior to the Reformation, the master and the boys played a much larger and more active role in the services conducted in the church, which have been discussed in more detail in Chapter Three. This is largely down to the fact that there was more for them to 'do' in the pre-Reformation church, more obligations to the founder, whether he were living or dead, to fulfill; the boys prayed for the founder, and the master, if he were a priest, might (regardless of whether or not it was a chantry school) conduct masses for the founder's soul or for feast days specified by the founder.

The statutes for the schools at Warrington, Lancashire, and Malpas, Cheshire, both founded in the 1520s, outline in detail the various church visits undertaken by the master and his students throughout the year. At Malpas school, the boys attended church three times a week, while the master assisted with the services. The Warrington schoolboys similarly attended church on Wednesday, Friday, and Sunday, two by two in procession, singing the litany appropriate to

that particular day; they were to be present in the choir of the parish church every Sunday and holiday, the schoolmaster in a surplice helping to perform the service to the best of his ability.³⁴ In the case of both Warrington and Malpas schools, the master was required to be a priest.

There are several detailed examples of school statutes and rules describing the structure and content of a church visit by the schoolmaster and his scholars after the mid-1540s. The main differences between these later visits, which would not change a great deal during the sixteenth century, and those of the 1520s were that the master no longer participated in the service, and the boys attended church only on Sundays and holidays, and only to hear the sermon, not to pray for the founder or commemorate saints' days with prayers and candles. The schoolmaster's main responsibility in terms of church visits shifted from active participation and facilitation, to simply ensuring that the visits were carried out and that the boys behaved during them, while the boys' responsibilities were similarly reduced to hearing the sermon and remembering its message.

At York in 1546 and at Hawkshead in 1588, the founders, Archbishop Holgate and Archbishop Sandys, required their schoolmasters to take the students to church to hear the service; these church visits appear very similar despite being forty years apart, and as they are described in great detail in the statutes for both schools, they will serve as instructive examples here. Every Sunday and holiday, the boys of Holgate's school were to sit with the master, in the choir either of the cathedral or of the parish church, which no longer survives, where the school was to be kept. Holgate's statutes state that the boys were to say matins together, in

³⁴ Cheshire RO, DCH/C/446, Malpas School foundation charter; Cheshire RO, SL/382/18/1, Warrington Boteler School foundation deed.

pairs, plus seven psalms, or to read the Scriptures. It is not clear whether this was done en route to the church, but evidence from other, earlier, schools indicate that perhaps this was the case; at Warrington and Malpas, for instance, the boys walked in procession, two by two, singing the litany for the day as best they could. In the case of Malpas they are described as processing around or within the church three times a week, not connected to visiting the church for a service.³⁵ To return to the Holgate example, once in church, some boys were expected to be reciting what they had learned, and all were to be ‘well occupied’ during the service, presumably meaning sitting and listening, or referring to the required recitations.³⁶

It is odd that the boys should be kept busy during the service, since surely reciting their lessons would prevent them from listening to the service, which was undoubtedly the point of their attending church? Exactly what it was the boys were meant to recite might answer this question; Holgate’s statutes give no details of the curriculum beyond that of grammar and the classical authors, but it might be that the boys were meant to recite what they were learning while in church. These statutes were made at a time when the boys and the master were no longer required to participate in various ceremonies as they might do before the 1540s, but slightly before they were required to go to church solely to hear a sermon, not to actively participate in any ceremonies as they had done earlier in the century.

The components of the service in 1546 were still very traditional. The role of the Pope, of course, had changed by 1546; relics were no longer venerated,

³⁵ Cheshire RO, SL382/18/1 Warrington Boteler School foundation deed; “Malpas Grammar School”, *Transactions of the Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire*, LXV (Liverpool, 1914), 194.

³⁶ Borthwick, Bp. Sch. 53, 5, Holgate’s School foundation charter.

lights were no longer placed before images, there were fewer guilds involved in the parish, and certain of the more ‘superstitious’ prayers, such as those to individual souls, or to saints whose feasts had been abolished, were no longer allowed, but the structure and content of the services still appeared very traditional.³⁷ The masses required at Warrington and Malpas twenty years earlier would no longer have been carried out, but it was still a very sensory experience: while there was preaching and some singing, the individual worshippers might read to themselves, perhaps aloud, and pray individually, again aloud.³⁸ The laity would watch, through the chancel screen, the priests in the chancel conducting the mass, but also pray or read individually in the nave; having both clergy and laity in the nave for the service became the norm after the middle of the sixteenth century.³⁹ Attending a church service was not, in other words, an entirely silent experience, and so if the boys of Holgate’s school were reciting something among themselves, this would not be entirely out of place. They were in fact encouraged to read their primer, or to repeat their prayers, with or without a rosary (this was just before rosaries were banned in 1547); indeed, one early sixteenth-century advice book describes well-behaved children keeping ‘theyr syght in the chirche cloce upon theyr bokes or bedes’.⁴⁰ When the priest actually celebrated the mass itself, a bell was rung to call people to attention, to view the elevated host in a visual experience rather than a solely aural one, in which Holgate’s reciting

³⁷ Duffy, *Stripping of the Altars*, 91-130, 448-477.

³⁸ Duffy, *Stripping of the Altars*, 91-130; William A. Dyrness, *Reformed Theology and Visual Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 16-48.

³⁹ Orme, “Children and the Church in Medieval England”, *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 45, 4 (October 1994): 569.

⁴⁰ Orme, *Medieval Children*, 213; Duffy, *Stripping of the Altars*, 118.

students would have been acceptable. Alternatively, or perhaps in addition to the reasons above, the recitation was simply meant to keep the boys from fidgeting and misbehaving during the service by giving them something edifying to do.

Forty years later, in 1588, Archbishop Edwin Sandys required a similar commitment from the master, usher, and scholars of his school at Hawkshead. They were to attend church on Sundays and holy days ‘to heare dyvine service and sermons’; all were to sit together in the chancel, with the master and usher to make sure the boys ‘behave[d] themselves soberlie and rev[er]endlie’ the entire time, including arriving and leaving, though particularly during the service and sermons themselves.⁴¹ They were not required to sing psalms or to recite their lessons as at Holgate’s school, however, as the emphasis was by then upon hearing the sermon.

By the time Sandys had founded his school, the visits to church to hear a sermon had become an official requirement at all schools, listed among the canons concerning church discipline of 1571. All schoolmasters were as often as any sermon shalbe...either send [their scholars], or bring them to church, that from their childhode they may be brought up in godliness: & lest they should heare it negligently: at their return to schole, they shall call and examine every one, what they have learned out of that sermon: and that the myndes of children, may be the most styrred up to vertue and diligence: they shall rebuke the idle and sluggish, and shall prayse the attentive and diligent.⁴²

This is reflected in the rules and statutes of individual schools both before and after 1571.

⁴¹ Borthwick, Bp. Sch. 25, 8, Hawkshead School foundation charter.

⁴² Church of England, *A Booke of Certaine Canons*, 27.

In Shrewsbury, anyone who had a student boarding with him had to make sure the boy went to church, morning and evening, every Sunday and holiday, but especially when there was a sermon. Older boys were appointed as monitors to oversee the behavior and attendance of the boys once in the church.⁴³ The master of Tadcaster school in 1596 was to bring his students to church to hear ‘the service of God and to heare the preaching & teaching of God’s holy word’ on Sundays and holy days, and at ‘times of sermons or comon prayers in the church’.⁴⁴ It is not recorded whether the students at Tadcaster were tested on the sermon the following day, but it is likely that they would have been; this was the general practice at most grammar schools. This may have been oral, as at Rivington, or written, since the 1568 timetables for Westminster School mention the boys handing in summaries of the sermon, in English, Latin prose, or Latin verse according to their ability, to the master in the afternoon on saints’ days, after the morning sermon.⁴⁵

The boys were meant to join in the service at church, and were sometimes required to bring prayer books or psalm books; this was more common in the seventeenth century, as at Dronfield in Derbyshire in 1638 and Chigwell in Essex in 1629, but at Oundle, Northamptonshire, in 1556, the boys were required to carry their prayer books to church, in Latin or English at the master’s discretion. This was the case at Rivington also, where the boys brought a psalter and New Testament in the language which they could read (English, Latin, or possibly even Greek), with older boys allowed to carry a full Bible; at Sir John Deane’s School,

⁴³ Oldham, *A History of Shrewsbury School*, 22.

⁴⁴ Borthwick, Bp. Sch. 45, 1, Tadcaster School statutes.

⁴⁵ Baldwin, *Shakspeare’s Small Latine*, I, 358, n. 37.

Northwich, in 1558 the boys were required to use their primer with the seven penitential psalms, the psalms of the passion, ‘and such like’.⁴⁶ Similarly, every boy at Wakefield School at the end of the sixteenth century had to have ‘a psalm-book in metre of his own’, for reading a chapter of the Bible every morning, and for singing a psalm every afternoon.⁴⁷

School visits to church took on a less participatory role after the Reformation, with a shift from active involvement in church services, often carried out for the founder’s soul, to dutiful hearing of the sermon. The amount of time spent in church decreased, but became more regularised, occurring every Sunday and holiday, rather than whenever the founder decreed. The role of the schoolmaster in these visits similarly changed from potentially participating in the service himself, to ensuring that his students were present and well-behaved. It is interesting to note that the boys were attending church with their classmates and schoolmaster, and not with their families, indicating that this was a formal component of their education. Similarly, understanding the sermon became part of their education also, as they were tested on its content and message in school. At Wakefield, those who could were required to take notes on the sermon, but all the students were expected to have paid close attention in church, because they were tested on Monday morning, for their ‘more profitable hearing’ of the sermon. The boys of Ipswich in the 1570s were meant to attend a sermon at least once a week in the town, apparently in addition to those given on Sundays and holidays – if so, this is certainly inculcating godly behaviour – and once they were back at school,

⁴⁶ Carlisle, *Concise Description*, I, 224, 420; II, 218 (Dronfield is identical in its wording to Chigwell); Lancashire RO, DDX94/117, statutes and charter of Rivington School; Cox, *Sir John Deane’s School Northwich*, 41.

⁴⁷ Borthwick, Bp. Sch. 46, foundation charter and statutes for Wakefield School.

the master or his usher chose one of the brightest students to give a report on all or part of the sermon. The boys of Rivington were expected to mark which chapters, homilies, and sermons were read on Sunday, so they would be prepared when tested on them later.

At Hertford School in 1616, the statutes take this still a step further: the boys sang along with the psalm, and read along with the chapter (as they were all expected to possess a psalter or Bible, as well as a catechism), and when it came to the sermon, they took notes in English or Latin, as they were able, and then wrote verses on the theme of the sermon; time was set aside first thing on Monday morning to go over the notes made on the previous day's sermon.⁴⁸ This close engagement with the sermon was partially religious instruction, partially moral instruction. One could interpret the fact that the master examined his students on their understanding of the sermon as another form of control over religious instruction, as their interpretation of the sermon's content and message was approved, or otherwise, by the master. Correct interpretation of sermons was an increasingly important concern as the need to instill a uniform doctrine, once one had been decided upon, became more necessary. In the care taken by the master that his students should understand what they heard in church, one sees the master exercising his role in 'bringing up' the young in good manners and religion, as he oversaw their behaviour in church (and thus, in public), in addition to imparting religious knowledge.

⁴⁸ Borthwick, Bp. Sch. 46, foundation charter and statutes for Wakefield School; "Statutes for Ipswich School, 1571", in I.E. Gray and W.E. Potter, *Ipswich School, 1400-1950* (Ipswich: W.E. Harrison & Sons, 1950), 40; Lancashire RO DDX94/177, statutes and charter of Rivington School; BL Add. MS 33578, Papers Relating to the Free Grammar School at Hertford, 1616-1671.

Classroom Prayers

Religious instruction, in one's duty to God and to one's neighbors, was also provided in the form of prayers by the master and his students, made throughout the day. While the practice of beginning and ending the day with prayers had been the way of structuring the school day throughout the middle ages, the changing religious practice in England during the sixteenth century is clearly reflected in the words and content of these prayers. There was a shift away from praying for the founder's soul and including prayers to the Virgin Mary, for instance, and towards praying for the founder as the founder rather than for the founder's soul, to the monarch, or to God to let the boys learn and serve Him as best they could. Sometimes these prayers for learning and serving God appear earlier in this period, but become more common later in the sixteenth century: the priest at St Paul's in 1512 was meant to sing mass daily, and to pray for the children 'to prosper in good life and in good literature, to the Honour of God and Our Lord Christ Jesu', not for John Colet's soul.⁴⁹ When the priest sang mass, and rang the sacring bell accordingly, the boys knelt in their seats, in the classroom, and prayed, returning to 'their bokes learninge' when the bell was rung to signal the end of mass. Colet does not actually say what the boys were praying 'about': perhaps one could infer from other schools that they were asking to increase their knowledge and improve their learning, for the glory of God, as this is what the priest was praying for also. Colet also does not specify how often the boys prayed

⁴⁹ "St Paul's School Statutes", in Carlisle, *Concise Description*, II, 74.

– was it once a day, with the mass, or was it twice, as was more common? It is likely that it was twice, at the start and the end of each day.⁵⁰

Items twelve and thirteen of Archbishop Holgate's statutes detail the religious observances to be followed at his school in York, which closely resemble the traditional medieval schedule of prayers: every day, when the master and usher entered the school, they were to kneel with their students and 'devoutly say' the psalm, listed in the statutes by its Latin title, 'Deus misereatur nostri et benedicat nobis', with 'Gloria patri'. The schoolmaster was to say the first verse, and the students the second, until the end of the psalm, followed by the 'Kyrieleyson' and 'O pater noster'. Finally two collects were sung: the first for the king and his successors 'Deus in cuius manu', the second for the founder, Holgate himself, one collect for his lifetime, and another for after his death; Holgate does not say whether this latter prayer was for his soul, or simply for his memory as the founder of the school. Given that the school was founded just before endowed prayers were officially abolished, but after perpetual chantries were outlawed, it is possible that it could have been for his soul, but given the foundation date, and Holgate's moderate reforming views, this is not very likely. The students were also to pray for the king and his heirs. Upon leaving the school for the day, the schoolmaster and the boys sang an anthem to the Virgin Mary, or something else chosen by the schoolmaster, with the versicle 'ora pro nobis santa dei genitrix' (again, to the Virgin), and three collects, one to 'our lady', one for the king and founder, and one for all Christian souls.⁵¹ This is, however, in the context

⁵⁰ Orme, *Medieval Schools*, 144.

⁵¹ Borthwick, Bp. Sch. 53, 4, Holgate's School foundation charter.

of the still relatively conservative Henrician church, where anthems and collects to the Virgin Mary for her prayers were still acceptable and still used; let us compare these with the prayers for Northwich and Hawkshead schools, in 1558 and 1586 respectively.

At Sir John Deane's School, Northwich, the boys were required to carry a primer in church (depending on whether the statutes were written before or after 1560, this was either the Elizabethan primer, or an earlier version), containing the seven penitential psalms, the psalms of the passion, 'and such like'. This seems very conservative, very Catholic: the school itself was founded in 1558, with the statutes, as is often the case, made up after the fact. These statutes could not have been made up much later than 1558, however, judging from their singling out of such psalms.⁵² The prayers prescribed for use in the school, three times a day, are those of thanksgiving, those asking for grace to profit in learning to God's glory, and those for the souls of the founder and his family and for all Christian souls. The first two prayers, as we will shortly see, are similar to those Edwin Sandys composed for Hawkshead school, while the second is also similar to that of the priest at St Paul's School, who prayed for the progress of the students in learning and not for anyones' souls. But the third and final prayer, for the founder's soul, is most certainly Catholic in nature. We do not actually know what John Deane's religious views were, precisely: his will, written in 1563, commends himself to the saints and the Virgin, but he was the parson of St Bartholomew's Smithfield under Henry VIII, Edward VI, Mary, and Elizabeth, so it appears that he was able

⁵² Duffy, *Stripping of the Altars*, 539, 567.

to outwardly conform and dissemble, whether he was inwardly traditional in his faith or not.⁵³

In addition to the seven penitential psalms discussed above, every Friday the boys of Northwiche School were to say seven psalms with the litany and a collect, with psalms of passion and mercy, the *De profundis*, and a collect every second Friday. As with the prayers, it is difficult to say whether they were of a religiously conservative nature because the founder was, or because the founder knew that that was what was allowed at the time. The school was founded in the name of Jesus, and every ‘Jesus Day’, every 7 August, a dirige and commendatory were said in the church in the afternoon, while the schoolmaster, further, was to be unmarried. The school at Northwiche thus still retained many conservative, Catholic elements, even after 1558.⁵⁴

At Hawkshead, the master, usher and scholars were to say prayers, composed by Sandys himself, at the start and end of each school day, as well as ‘singe a psalme in meter’ before the break for dinner at midday. Sandys himself composed the prayers for this purpose; like his sermons, they reflect his anti-Catholic views. There are three listed in the foundation charter of his school: one for the morning, one for the evening, and one for ‘the Queens Ma[jes]tie’. The prayer for the Queen asks that she be given the grace to follow the will of God, ‘the sole ruler of princes’, and that she live a long and triumphant life, finding everlasting joy after death, through Christ. The morning prayer emphasizes the sin and corruption of mankind, and insists that one can only profit from one’s study

⁵³ Cox, *John Deane’s School, Northwiche*, 14-16.

⁵⁴ Cox, *John Deane’s School, Northwiche*, 42.

and attain to knowledge of Christ through God's grace and goodness. The prayer is made in the name of Christ, and asks that God strengthen the memories of the students and illuminate their minds, to the glory of God and the profit of the church. There is no doubt here that learning, for Sandys, was a godly endeavour, just as establishing a school was a godly act. The evening prayer makes this very clear: it is largely a prayer of thanksgiving, thanking God for having 'moved the mynde, and stirred up the harte' of Archbishop Sandys to found the school, and asks that he help the students always to be thankful for its foundation, and to apply themselves to study with God's help, and to God's glory and praise, for Jesus' sake, 'our onelie Redem[er] and savior'.⁵⁵

Shrewsbury School, certainly by 1604 but perhaps as early as the 1570s, followed the conventional pattern of prayers at the beginning and end of each school day. The morning prayer began with a hymn, with verses taken from Psalms 90 and 92, on the themes of God's compassion and prospering of mankind's work, as well as a verse taken from a hymn based on the word of Psalm 92, 'For through Thy works, Lord, Thou hast made our souls right glad to be, and in Thy works we will triumph, which have been wrought by thee'; this was followed by the Creed, and the prayer itself, thanking God for his blessings, especially for keeping the students safe during the night, asking that they be made vessels for the Holy Spirit and that they increase in wisdom through Christ. The evening prayers begin with the Creed, and ask God to bless the scholars in their studies, which were in vain without God's help, in order that they may be 'fit instruments' for the church and commonwealth; they ask for grace to use what

⁵⁵ Borthwick, Bp. Sch. 25, 6-8, Hawkshead School foundation charter.

they had learned to God's glory and their parents' comfort, forgiveness for their faults that day, and 'godliness, knowledge, and understanding', and finally ask once again that their souls be kept safe from the devil even while they slept. This is further followed by a short prayer for the 'Church Universal', for the monarch and the realm, and for peace through Christ.⁵⁶ The prayers of thanks for bringing the students safely through the night are the same as those at Rivington, while the request that God keep them safe from the perils of the night is seen at Rivington and at East Retford in 1552.

These prayers were usually undertaken in the school itself, though in some cases, they took place in the church. At Ruthin in 1574, for example, the master and boys met at the church at six o'clock every morning, to 'publically offer prayers to God'.⁵⁷ The practice of beginning and ending the day with prayers may echo the monastic routine, which involved prayers throughout the day following the canonical hours; these hours were reduced down to two, matins and evensong, morning and evening, which was the pattern for most school prayers.⁵⁸ The patron or founder of a school, or perhaps the schoolmaster, might compose these prayers himself.⁵⁹ While John Deane, for instance, did not write specific prayers for use in his school, his rules regarding religious worship in the school are conservative for statutes made shortly after 1558. Prayers composed by the founder, or rules for worship written by the founder, may reflect the founder's religious leanings, but may also reflect an uncertainty about what would be acceptable in the new reign.

⁵⁶ Oldham, *A History of Shrewsbury School*, 20-21.

⁵⁷ "Ruthin School rules", in Sylvester, ed., *Educational Documents*, 112.

⁵⁸ James G. Clarke, *The Culture of Medieval English Monasticism* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2007), 208 n.9.

⁵⁹ Green, *Humanism and Protestantism*, 280-1.

These prayers might be written on a table on the wall of the classroom, as at Ipswich in 1571, to prevent improvisation, or be taken directly from the prayers included in Lily's *Grammar*; as at Yarm in 1590. Praying twice a day was the more common practice, at the start and finish of each school day, though some schools, like those at Hawkshead and Northwich, might pray three times a day.⁶⁰

The founder of Kirkby Stephen school in 1566, Sir Thomas Wharton, listed his fifteen favourite psalms, to be sung at his tomb. Lord Wharton was conservative in religion, described by one biographer as the sort of man who would have founded a chantry had he lived earlier in the century. The students were to go 'by two and two, and the schoolmaster. . .into the chapel, where I have made and set up a tomb, and there sing together [one of the fifteen psalms].'⁶¹ More usually, there might be one psalm chosen to be sung regularly, or a school hymn; Heath school near Halifax let the master and usher pick the hymn, while St Paul's in the 1549 King's Grammar had sung the *Veni creator* –widely used in ceremonies such as confirmation, and calling upon the Holy Spirit, just as later prayers would call on God to increase the students' wisdom – in the school every morning; the use of the *Veni creator* in the school dated back to Colet's time, but it was dropped in the 1560s.⁶² The boys at Rivington after 1570 were to recite Psalm 25 ('Unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul') after their morning prayers, meditate upon Psalm 103 ('Bless the Lord, O my soul'), and recite Psalm 51 ('Have mercy upon me, O God'), during the evening prayers. The first two psalms

⁶⁰ "Statutes for Ipswich School", in Grey and Potter, *Ipswich School*, 39-40; Green, *Humanism and Protestantism*, 275, 280-81; Cheshire RO, SL300/2/32, Sir John Deane's School statutes.

⁶¹ M.E. James, in Alec Swailes, *Kirkby Stephen Grammar School 1566-1966* (Appleby: J. Whitehead & Son, 1966), 17.

⁶² Green, *Humanism and Protestantism*, 282, 150.

ask for divine guidance and forgiveness, praising God's capacity to give both these things, while the third is primarily a prayer for forgiveness. There are similarities seen between the prayers of different schools over time, even though particular prayers dropped out and new ones were introduced. While by the end of this period the students were no longer praying for the soul of the founder, as they had done earlier, the founder was still remembered in their prayers, as they called on God to bless him and gave thanks for his godly work in founding their school. The reciting of a psalm would still be the norm, but the prayers to the virgin were dropped, and instead God was called upon to bless the endeavors of the students as they learned their grammar and morals.

Religious Instruction on the Continent – Comparisons

On the Continent, the place of religious instruction in formal education was quite different from the English context. For contrast with England, Catholic Italy and Lutheran German areas will serve as examples of where English schools sat in relation to religious instruction in different confessional contexts. On both sides of the confessional divide, instruction in the catechism had only become an urgent duty in the sixteenth century, and was unpopular with the clergy, who had to teach it, and with the laity, who had to learn it and saw it as something only suitable for children.⁶³ On the whole, English schoolboys spent less time with religious instruction than scholars on the Continent.⁶⁴ In Italy, children had

⁶³ Delumeau, *Catholicism Between Luther and Voltaire*, 199.

⁶⁴ Green, *Humanism and Protestantism*, 154.

received very little religious education until the Renaissance, unless they were boys who intended to enter the clergy; this is similar to English education prior to the sixteenth century.⁶⁵ Education became available to those not intended for the priesthood during the Renaissance in Italy, although it was of a more distinctly religious nature – this is somewhat similar to England, though spurred on by the Catholic Counter-Reformation rather than the need for Protestant religious uniformity. Italy had catechism schools, which might also teach reading and writing, to girls as well as boys; these seem almost a combination between the English petty schools and the religious instruction found in the grammar schools, and were meant to eradicate ignorance, especially among the poor – an interesting comparison with England, where schools were meant to eradicate idleness as well as religious ignorance, but not specifically among the poor.⁶⁶ The twenty-third session of the Council of Trent declared that there should be seminaries, specifically for the purpose of training future clergy, meant for boys over the age of twelve, to keep them away from the corrupt world in order that they might have the best training possible for a church career.⁶⁷

In the Italian context, then, education did take on a more religious tone, as instruction in the faith became more rigorous. Such a concern is clearly not, therefore, confined to a Protestant society, as Catholics were very much concerned with it too; as confessional divides hardened, we see religious education being given importance on both sides of that divide. In Lutheran areas, we have seen the role that religious instruction played in schools; schools in Calvinist Geneva were

⁶⁵ Green, *Humanism and Protestantism*, 271.

⁶⁶ Grendler, *Schooling in Renaissance Italy*, 357.

⁶⁷ Delumeau, *Catholicism Between Luther and Voltaire*, 22.

similarly rigorous in the amount of catechetical instruction, prayers, psalms, and sermons found in schools. In Catholic Italy, instruction in religion was extended to the poor with the founding of the Schools of Christian Doctrine for the poor in the 1530s, and later the Scuole Pie; both were established by clergy independent of state authority. During the Counter-Reformation, the existing schools were, by individual clergy and laypeople, put under the care of the religious orders to improve the levels of religious instruction the schools provided.⁶⁸ Instruction in Christian morality was an important issue in English grammar education also. This is not so apparent when one looks at the textbooks the schools were using: beside some Christian content in Lily's grammar, the texts were generally all classical. It does become more apparent when examining the attitudes towards these texts, as in Chapters One and Four; while they were widely used and accepted, there was some unease about exposing children to classical texts, with their morals in some cases at odds with Christian ideals.

French grammar texts were very catechetical in nature, citing the Church Fathers and including more scriptural examples than those in England; the English grammar reduced the amount of scriptural or ecclesiastical examples and put the catechism into a separate book. By the mid-sixteenth century in France there was a standard grammar text, the *Commentarii grammatici* of Despauterius. French primers, along with those used in Italy, followed a similar format to those which had been used in medieval English schools, with the catechism, alphabet and syllables, Lord's Prayer, Apostles' Creed, graces for meals, and prayers.⁶⁹

⁶⁸ Green, *Humanism and Protestantism*, 270-71, 275.

⁶⁹ Green, *Humanism and Protestantism*, 272.

The situation in Lutheran areas was quite different, both from Italy and from England. Despite having an official grammar textbook and official catechisms, England did not have a unified school ‘system’ as did the Protestant German lands. Between the 1520s and 1560s children were targeted with rigorous catechism instruction: initially this was meant to be carried out at home, but when parents proved unable, or unwilling, to provide this instruction to a very high level, catechism instruction was soon transferred to the schools. Luther’s vision for the German people was of their complete ‘moulding’, or ‘indoctrination’ in the new faith, with particular emphasis on the young. Students in German schools sang hymns, studied the catechism regularly, and read the New Testament in Greek in some schools. Catechism study in particular was much more rigorous than in England: it was undertaken daily, with weekly examinations, in addition to quizzes on the sermon, as well as the church visits found in English grammar schools.⁷⁰ Luther’s catechism was also longer and more complicated than the English Prayer Book Catechism. Catechizing was considered ideal for religious instruction because, unlike the Bible, it was not ambiguous, or open to interpretation, thus requiring little actual contact with the Bible and avoiding the consequences of individual Bible-reading and interpretation; sermon texts were even taken from the catechism.⁷¹ In the ideal Lutheran school, the classical authors were reduced in the curriculum to make more room for the study of Scripture.⁷² In other respects, however, English and Lutheran German schools were using similar teaching methods, teaching Latin through dialogues and

⁷⁰ Strauss, *Luther’s House of Learning*, 201.

⁷¹ Strauss, *Luther’s House of Learning*, 202, 204-05.

⁷² Simon, *Education and Society in Tudor England*, 135.

colloquies, and through the keeping of commonplace books, to instill morals and good character as much as knowledge of grammar.⁷³ Yet besides memorizing, and learning to read from, the catechism, ‘at the lowest level of English education. . . Protestant indoctrination [was] elementary and cautious’.⁷⁴

Unlike in England, where schools were founded or re-founded through individual initiative and with royal approval, Lutheran German schools were to be established entirely by the state, with the textbooks to be chosen by the school and ecclesiastical authorities, not by the schoolmasters.⁷⁵ Luther insisted that children belonged to God, and that their education was for the public good, and for the sake of God himself, who had given humanity the responsibility to educate the young.⁷⁶ The idea that education was for the improvement of society and the glory of God was very similar to that of England, but in Germany, Protestant society would be improved through a *system* – this was how reform would be made to work, systematically, uniformly, and from the top down. It was the highest responsibility of a ruler to ensure that his subjects were instructed in the faith. English schools acknowledged this in some capacity, as the preambles to letters patent and other foundation documents speak of the zeal of the monarch towards the education and bringing up of the youth of England, but German education took this idea even further. Everything about education in the German context was strictly regulated, from the curriculum to the orthodoxy of the schoolmaster to whether children were actually attending school; their visitations of schools were

⁷³ Strauss, *Luther's House of Learning*, 193.

⁷⁴ Green, *Humanism and Protestantism*, 269-72, 290.

⁷⁵ Strauss, *Luther's House of Learning*, 192.

⁷⁶ Strauss, *Luther's House of Learning*, 8.

far more rigorous than those of England, which only began in 1535 and were initially only to the universities where canon law was taught. Lutheran visitations were announced in advance, and could be yearly, or more frequently if they were local. German school visitations were incorporated with thorough investigations of the parish more generally: the visitors went through the parish inventory, tested the priest, and asked him whether there was a school, was the master paid enough, and what the parishioners thought of how the parish was run, thoroughly probing for honest answers.⁷⁷ English school visitations were not quite so thorough, yet there was a state interest in monitoring the quality of the schools and schoolmasters, described in greater detail in Chapters Two and Three.

It was a high calling to be a schoolmaster in Protestant Germany, at least according to Luther's ideal, one that was divinely ordained.⁷⁸ Again, this is similar to the English context (recall the statutes of Wakefield School, discussed in Chapter Three, where the master and usher were held to their teaching duties at the day of judgement), and England did learn relatively quickly of the developments in German education at this time.⁷⁹ But there seem to have been two main differences between education in England and on the Continent.

First, in England the doctrine of the new faith was not as clearly defined as it was, for instance, in Lutheran Germany or Counter-Reformation Italy. Luther and his followers knew exactly the doctrine they wanted to promote, precisely what they wanted to teach and what they wanted to avoid. In Catholic countries, too, the situation was more sharply Catholic versus Protestant. But in England, the

⁷⁷ Strauss, *Luther's House of Learning*, 252.

⁷⁸ Strauss, *Luther's House of Learning*, 11-13, 16.

⁷⁹ Simon, *Education and Society in Tudor England*, 136.

doctrine, rites, services, and practices of the church after the break with Rome were changing from one reign to the next, and even within the space of a single reign. What kind of religious instruction would be acceptable? As the authorities kept altering what was allowed and what was not, it was difficult to agree on this point. Perhaps this clarifies why primers in English translation, especially those printed without royal approval, were initially considered so threatening; at a time when the details of the official religion were still under deliberation it would be unwise to expose the laity to the content of the Scriptures or the words of the service.⁸⁰ It may also explain why, on the other hand, in German Protestant education, vernacular education was encouraged, as it was more clear what the official doctrine was. The Reformation in England had been called the Reformations, plural, for this reason, and because its cause, or causes, were short-term political ones, and not a long-term socio-religious one.⁸¹ While enforcing religious conformity, whether extremely Protestant, Catholic, or moderate Protestant, was a definite aim of English government in this period, Lutheran, Calvinist, and Counter-Reformation Catholic areas of Europe were far more rigorous in this regard.

In the English schools, students were less exposed to official church doctrine than they were on the Continent, or in Scotland: an hour or two of catechism study every week, compared with every day in Calvinist and Lutheran schools, for instance, illustrates this point. Having uniformly trained Protestant clergy did not begin to occur until later in the Elizabethan period and may not

⁸⁰ Duffy, *Stripping of the Altars*, 405.

⁸¹ Haigh, *English Reformations: Religion, Politics, and Society Under the Tudors* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 12-21.

have been accomplished until the 1620s.⁸² Lutherans knew right away what they wanted to achieve, so they were able to implement it more quickly, despite the fact that it did not entirely work as planned. In the Calvinist context, the upper school of the Geneva Academy was intended for those who would join the clergy, and their instruction in rhetoric, Greek, Hebrew, and study of the Old Testament was all aimed at producing Calvinist clergy.⁸³ England seems to have taken so long to have uniformly trained clergy because they did not agree on what they wanted to achieve in doctrinal terms until the Elizabethan period.

The second difference is that, as mentioned above, England had no single educational system as such. The German areas did; regardless of how effectively it worked, a single system was envisioned and put into place. Italian schools were generally run by the communal or civic authorities, depending on the city, for the public good. In Scotland after the mid-sixteen century, there was a system of education organized and enforced by church authority. In England, there had been practically no government involvement in education throughout the middle ages – Henry VI’s foundation of Eton College was a notable exception – and there was no legislation requiring the provision of schools in towns or cathedrals. The church did not take an interest in education unless it was to teach future priests, as it was not formally required to do so.⁸⁴ From the late fourteenth century, chantry priests might take on teaching duties voluntarily, to supplement their income,

⁸² Marshall, *The Impact of the English Reformation*, 5.

⁸³ Gillian Lewis, “The Geneva Academy”, in *Calvinism in Europe, 1540-1620*, ed. Andrew Pettegree, Alastair Duke, and Gillian Lewis (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 40-46.

⁸⁴ Orme, *Medieval Schools*, 288.

although there was no actual requirement for them to do so until the 1530s, when many chantries took on the additional function of grammar school.

The new religious policies really began to affect schools at the dissolution of the chantries, when so many schools which had formerly been part of chantry endowments were re-endowed as grammar schools. But under Edward VI, those changes prescribed at the dissolution of the chantries were actually being put into practice, and began to work and take effect, and it is around this time, around 1550, that the pattern of endowed and re-founded schools with letters patent from the crown, began to emerge, and in which a fairly standard, approved curriculum took shape: in other words, the patterns that were followed for the rest of the Tudor and early Stuart period begin to solidify after the 1540s. This, at least, is the view advanced over sixty years ago by T.W. Baldwin in his *Shakspeare's Small Latin and Lesse Greek*, but based on the schools studied here, and on more recent work on Tudor education, it seems to fit.⁸⁵ Baldwin does tend to deliberately leave out religious instruction, passing it over as being unimportant to his purpose of explaining Shakespeare's education, but his description of how a uniform curriculum took shape and took hold through the imitation of a few leading schools is still convincing. It was not a strict break with the past, as the official grammar was prescribed as early as 1540, and endowed schools certainly existed before then, but the curricula of schools across the country became more consciously uniform, and the endowed grammar school, unconnected to a chantry

⁸⁵ Baldwin, *Shakspeare's Small Latine*, I, 285-321.

and with a broader purpose than training future clergy, had become the standard model for school foundations after the middle of the sixteenth century.⁸⁶

Does a change in religious education equal a change in grammar education? Humanism, with its emphasis on the ‘best’ classical, albeit non-Christian, literature, certainly alters the grammar school curriculum, but in a sense the Reformation did affect grammar instruction, in that there was an increased concern to expurgate anything immoral, any passages or themes which pre-Reformation text books had still allowed. There is not a shift to be observed towards reading Christian authors; in fact this does not take hold as, for instance, John Colet might have wished it to. The shift is in almost the opposite direction, towards the best examples of classical literature, with religious instruction alongside grammar instruction, not religious instruction *as* grammar instruction.

Grammar schools after the Reformation tended to emphasize their religious purpose more overtly, and enforce it more thoroughly. Yet religious instruction was less prominent in the curricula than it would appear, though it was nonetheless important. The same period when religion was most heavily emphasized was the same one in which the classical humanist, and therefore largely non-Christian, curriculum had become the standard (though not always accepted) curriculum. The students’ experience of religious education was also being scaled back, becoming less participatory and more auditory, and more separate from the humanist grammar education.

⁸⁶ Orme, *Medieval Schools*, 254.

CHAPTER 6

GREEK

The place of Greek studies within the grammar school curriculum illustrates the influence of both humanism and Protestantism in education at this time. Greek literature was familiar to many people during the Renaissance through Latin translation,¹ but understanding the original language was an entirely different matter – why would one need to learn ancient Greek in sixteenth-century England? The earliest humanists in Italy had not at first insisted on learning it.² Was Greek taught in order to read classical literature, or to read the New Testament in its (nearly) original language? The former is an indication of humanist influence in grammar school instruction, but does not indicate any religious leanings. The latter, however, will give us some idea of how the religious changes of the period affected education – if schoolboys were being taught to read Scripture in Greek, it follows that the Latin Vulgate was not a suitable version of the Bible for them to read: a Protestant view. From a Catholic viewpoint, the Vulgate was the authoritative version of the Bible, and the need to read it in the Greek language was not a pressing concern. But what about the humanists before the Reformation? Erasmus translated the New Testament from Greek, indicating his dissatisfaction with the Latin Vulgate text then in use, yet he was not Protestant. Erasmus did think, however, that the texts of the Gospels were

¹ David Scott Wilson-Okamura, *Virgil in the Renaissance*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 4.

² Green, *Humanism and Protestantism*, 254.

written in very poor Greek.³ The premise still stands, however, that an *ad fontes* approach to reading the most correct version of Scripture appears more Protestant than Catholic when speaking of education in this period, but with the qualification that the Catholic humanists were doing the same thing. It was feared during the 1530s that learning Greek was linked to religious reform, and it seems that ‘Greek knowledge and religious reform *did* go hand in hand’, as Greek scholars in England also studied theology, and Edward VI and Elizabeth I both learned theology as they learned Greek.⁴

This chapter will address the reasons why Greek was such a desirable part of the humanist curriculum, and where it fitted into both university and grammar school curricula, arguing that even at the university level, Greek was not always taught to as high a level as Latin. This is followed by an examination of the texts and teaching methods used to teach Greek in the grammar school classroom, as well as a short discussion of the other learned language, Hebrew, which was even more rare in grammar schools but was just as much a part of the ideal curriculum as Latin or Greek. There is a significant gap between theory and practice when it comes to the teaching of Greek in the grammar schools, as it was one important element of both humanist and Protestant education which, in England at least, did not live up to the ideals envisioned by scholars or school founders.

³ Simon Goldhill, *Who Needs Greek? Contests in the Cultural History of Hellenism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 24.

⁴ Goldhill, *Who Needs Greek?*, 33.

Why Learn Greek?

The ecclesiastical canons of 1571 make it clear that the main duty of the schoolmaster was to teach boys to participate in church services; to this end they were to learn Latin and Greek, and read those books which ‘profit to the knowledge of Christ and godlynes’.⁵ Surely this means that Greek study was to be applied to the reading of the New Testament? Surely that was more useful in church services than ancient Greek poetry? Yet similar question could be asked of Latin: Catholics needed Latin for reading the Vulgate, and for performing church services. What would a Protestant need it for? The services were in English in a Protestant church, and the original language of the New Testament was Greek: learning rhetoric, and reading classical Greek authors for the wisdom they contained, were the main reasons, held in common with humanists both Catholic and Protestant.⁶

Juan Luis Vives maintained that, since the study of language was meant to be applied to life, in a practical sense, not everyone should spend their time learning Greek. Enough Greek ‘to converse on Greek subjects’ was all that was needed for most students, lest they become ‘wild and senseless’, the idea being that if they learned this difficult language improperly, they would harm not only their own mind but the learned world in general. Only those who intend to be scholars and teachers should learn Greek to a high standard, said Vives, but for those who are intelligent, but wish to pursue a more public career, Greek will

⁵ “Ecclesiastical Canons, 1571”, in Sylvester, ed., *Educational Documents*, 125-26.

⁶ Goldhill, *Who Needs Greek?*, 36.

serve them in this public role (though Vives did not say how), as well as occupy them in their leisure time and in old age – though to what end? Reading the classical authors? Or reading a good translation of the New Testament?⁷ The former is perhaps more likely, given that Vives' *De tradendis disciplinis* was published in 1531, when he would still have had to have been careful about encouraging the reading of Biblical translations.

What was 'enough' Greek, in Vives' view? *De tradendis disciplinis* sets out a detailed scheme for how Greek was to be taught. It must be borne in mind, however, that Vives was writing more in the context of private tutoring, although he did write his *Dialogues* with schoolboys in mind, so his ideas would apply in a grammar school context as well. Greek, for Vives, was to be started after gaining a basic grounding in Latin, then the 'beginnings' of Greek were to be brought up to the same level as Latin 'so that the two may proceed together side by side'.⁸ This does not seem to match his statement that some students should study a limited amount of Greek, so this method was apparently not suitable for every scholar.

To learn the language, Vives would begin with the 'tables' of Alexander and the first of Theodore Gaza's four books on Greek grammar, written in the late fifteenth century and translated by Erasmus into Latin, to learn the basics of the alphabet, declensions, and conjugations, followed by translating Aesop's Fables, because this is what the Greeks themselves began with, and because the words and meanings were easy for the beginner. The Greek language was to be taught

⁷ Vives, *De tradendis*, 151-2.

⁸ Vives, *De tradendis*, 143.

through orations, the books of John Chrysostom and Theodore Gaza, who Vives believed discussed the subject as Aristotle would, as well as through epigrams, the plays of Aristophanes and Euripides, and the poetry of Homer, all while noting the differences between Latin and Greek grammar, and paying greater attention to the style and expression of the works than to their treatment of their subject matter.

This is an entirely classical curriculum: not once in the entire chapter on ‘The Study of Greek’ does Vives mention the New Testament. He is concerned with the moral content of the literature read by the students, that ‘it is not of a corrupting influence’, but he does not appear to consider the potential for applying Greek to the reading of Scripture; Vives’ methods appear quite similar to the approach taken in Jesuit schools, discussed in greater detail below.⁹ Thomas Elyot would have Greek taught together with Latin, following the advice of Quintilian, or even have Greek taught first: it was a difficult language, but one should start it early, at the age of seven, and study it for three years, using Latin as the language of instruction (which would obviously not work with learning Greek *before* Latin).¹⁰ A look at the two most common Greek grammars in England, those of Nicholas Clenard and William Camden, proves that learning the two languages together, or putting Greek first, would be very difficult, if not impossible, as both books use Latin to explain the Greek.¹¹

Vives was aware of the apparent discrepancy, discussed earlier, between a Christian education and the pagan, classical, literature of the ancient world. He

⁹ Vives, *De tradendis*, 143-149.

¹⁰ Elyot, *The Boke Named the Governour*, fol. 30 r.

¹¹ Nicholas Clenard, *Institutiones linguae graecae N. Clenardo authore* (Thomas Marsh, 1582), EEBO; William Camden, *Institutio graecae grammaticae compendiaria in usum regiae scholae Westmonasteriensis* (Bonhamus Norton, 1600), EEBO.

goes some way towards explaining the use of this literature for a Christian education in his discussion of why Homer should be read: Homer's poetry accurately reflects 'human life. . . after all these centuries, with their altered customs. . . his words, precepts, conversations, speeches, etc are still suitable to our age and for every other'.¹² Elyot similarly singled out Homer as the poet 'from whom as from a fountaine proceded all eloquence and lernyng'.¹³ Humanists referred to St Basil, who, in his fourth century *Exhortation to Youths as to How They Shall Best Profit by the Writings of Pagan Authors*, had believed that reading classical literature was acceptable: it taught virtue, and prepared one for reading the Scriptures. Classical literature could be highly moral, with virtue (which does not seem to have a specifically Christian definition here) taught through allegory as in the Bible; it was beautiful in terms of its style, but one should only imitate the moral parts. Heresy came from reading theologians, not pre-Christian authors, hence in Venice and every other Catholic state the banning of Protestant authors, and of Erasmus since his work inspired Luther, rather than the banning of classical authors.¹⁴

On the continent, the Jesuits promoted a humanist education at their schools, based around the classical authors; their intention was to turn out eloquent, confident students, trained in the arts of rhetoric and oratory through the study of the best classical authors.¹⁵ The course of study in the Jesuit schools in

¹² Vives, *De tradendis*, 145.

¹³ Elyot, *The Boke Named the Governour*, fol. 32 v.

¹⁴ Grendler, *The Roman Inquisition and the Venetian Press, 1540-1605* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977), 64, 70.

¹⁵ J.J. Scarisbrick, *The Jesuits and the Catholic Reformation* (London: The Historical Association, 1989), 16.

France was five years long, built around the *studia humanitatis*; Greek was introduced in the fourth year, for boys between the ages of about ten and fourteen. The goal was that in their final year they would be able to compose both prose and poetry in Latin and in Greek, and pronounce both languages well.¹⁶ The Jesuit *Ratio atque institutio studiorum*, based on the education given in French Jesuit schools, stipulates that only classical authors should be used to teach Greek, in contrast to the English use of the New Testament, ‘provided they are expurgated’; St Basil, St Gregory Nazianzen, and St John Chrysostom were also included, with a focus on ‘propriety and the use of language’. The classical authors included Demosthenes, Plato, Thucydides, Homer, Hesiod, and Pindar, with a focus at first on orators and history for the first half of the year, and in the second half, a greater focus on poetry. This was to be broken occasionally by learning something about the culture in which these writings were produced, ‘for the sake of scholarly learning’, but only in moderation.¹⁷ Here, the focus was on style, rather than content, since some of the content was expurgated anyway, and Greek was being used for the same purpose as Latin was used in grammar schools: to practice prose and poetry composition, and to practice the art of rhetoric. The Jesuit approach to the study of Greek came much closer to the ideal envisioned by the early humanist scholars than did the approach of most English grammar schools.

Roger Ascham, in *The Scholemaster*, wrote of the value of Greek study for the imitation of the best classical authors. He would have students read Latin and Greek literature both together, and note the points of imitation between them. His

¹⁶ A. Lynn Martin, *The Jesuit Mind: The Mentality of an Elite in Early Modern France* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988), 61.

¹⁷ Pavur, ed., *Ratio studiorum*, 163.

examples of imitation, such as Virgil's imitation of the style of Homer, were always of a Greek author by a Latin one: just as the students and readers of his own day imitated the Latin authors, those same authors imitated the Greek writers, and therein lay Ascham's argument in favour of learning Greek: '[I]t is verie rare, and meruelous hard, to prove excellent in the Latin tong, for him that is not also well seene in the Greek tong', Ascham wrote, giving the example of Cicero, who reached the level of skill in Latin composition that he did because of his knowledge and imitation of Greek, not simply Latin. *The Scholemaster* was concerned primarily with the 'plain and perfit way of teaching the latin tong', yet Ascham discussed the merits of Greek in some detail, because Greek was a way to teach the best, most correct and eloquent Latin. One needs both languages, he claimed, just as a bird needs both wings – knowledge of Greek improves our understanding of Latin, and even the best Latin translations of Greek literature are imperfect compared with the originals.¹⁸ Quintilian and Cicero had both believed that Greek was necessary for the serious writing of Latin poetry, history, and oratory, as well as to properly appreciate Latin; Cicero, for example, had used many Greek phrases in his work.¹⁹

Yet just as with Vives, Ascham does not mention the value of Greek study for reading the Bible. He does mention the Bible, when quoting the words of John Cheke, that if a student were only to read the Bible, Cicero, and the best Greek authors, he would 'prove an excellent man', but does not say whether this ought to be the Bible in Latin, or Greek, or even in the vernacular.²⁰ In practice, however, it

¹⁸ Ascham, *The Scholemaster*, 51-52.

¹⁹ Grafton and Jardine, *From Humanism to the Humanities*, 99.

²⁰ Ascham, *The Scholemaster*, 51-52.

seems that only those students with a serious academic inclination could pursue the study of Greek, and that it was only those students who were really encouraged to do so.

Greek in the Universities

To more properly understand the place of Greek in the grammar school curriculum, one must turn to whether the universities were teaching the subject in the sixteenth century, because it was in the universities that Greek first made its appearance in English education. In his *Description of England* (1587), William Harrison listed readers in Greek, as well as in Hebrew, at Oxford and Cambridge.²¹ By the time Harrison was writing, was this beginners' Greek? At the beginning of the century, is almost certainly was, and this point is significant for understanding the place of Greek in the grammar schools.

The early English humanists who were so enthusiastic about the study of Greek – Linacre, Lily, Tunstall, Pace, Grocyn – learnt the rudiments of Greek at Oxford, but carried on their study in Italy (Lily in fact went as far as Rhodes to learn the language). The best Greek scholars were to be found in Italy after 1453; Italian universities had Greek professorships in the fifteenth century (for example at Padua in 1463), with Greek speakers to fill them.²² It seems that through a combination of learning the basics at Oxford, traveling to Italy, and teaching each other back in England, a small group of Greek scholars emerged in the early

²¹ From "William Harrison, *Description of England*, Bk. II, ch. 3, 1587", in Sylvester, ed., *Educational Documents*, 147.

²² Grendler, *The Universities of the Italian Renaissance*, 225.

sixteenth century.²³ New colleges at Cambridge were founded around this time, Christ's in 1505 and St John's in 1511, but there is no mention of Greek in the St John's statutes until 1524, and in 1530 a Greek lecturer was provided for £3 a year.²⁴ John Fisher, Bishop of Rochester, was concerned to bring Greek teaching up to a higher standard and appointed a former student of Eton and King's, Richard Croke, as Greek reader at Cambridge in 1506. Croke had studied on the continent, translated the fourth book of Theodore Gaza, and was the first Englishman to write his own Greek grammar book. Oxford also offered him a post, but he chose to remain at Cambridge instead in 1518. His first lecture discussed the importance of the New Testament and the Church Fathers for the study of theology.²⁵ Erasmus taught Greek at Queens' College in 1511; his was a beginners' class, taught with the grammars of Chrysoloras (1478) and Theodore Gaza (1495). Erasmus had taught himself Greek, and the university wanted to keep him so much that they increased his stipend. Fellows of the college came to learn Greek from Erasmus, as did undergraduates, not all from Queens' College – they were not learning any Greek until well into their time at university. Thomas Starkey and Nicholas Udall both learned Greek at Oxford.²⁶

When Erasmus left England in 1514, he exposed a lack of Greek teachers at the English universities. The numbers of students had been small, but the intellectual climate was largely receptive to the subject at both universities.

Erasmus believed Latimer or Tunstall to be ideal teachers of the language, and

²³ Arthur Tilley, "Greek Studies in England in the Early Sixteenth Century", *The English Historical Review*, 53, 210, (April 1938): 224.

²⁴ Tilley, "Greek Studies in England", 225.

²⁵ Tilley, "Greek Studies in England", 231-232.

²⁶ Tilley, "Greek Studies in England", 227-229, 237.

that their teaching would certainly be better than the declining standards of Greek instruction in Italy.²⁷ A royal injunction of 1535 declared that Cambridge must maintain a reader in Greek; Roger Ascham would fill this position in 1538.²⁸ Regius professorships were founded in Greek and Hebrew at Cambridge in 1541 and at Oxford in 1547, so Greek was certainly being taught in the universities by mid-century; indeed, it has been described recently as being ‘firmly entrenched’ in the university curriculum by the 1540s; a book of poems composed by Cambridge students presented to Elizabeth I in 1564 contains many verses in Greek, with several in Hebrew as well – the students were instructed in Greek well enough to compose poetry, at least while at university.²⁹ But what about the grammar schools? The founder of Trinity College, Oxford, Thomas Pope, referred to ‘the Greek tongue growing apace’ at Eton when he was a boy there in the late 1510s and early 1520s, and William Horman’s *Vulgaria*, in use at Eton in 1519, contained many Greek references, implying that Greek was a regular subject at Eton and that the students would understand these references to Greek.³⁰ However, Eton was one of the better-endowed schools, attracting the more learned schoolmasters, and while it is certainly useful to know that Eton was apparently teaching its students Greek, and with some success, Greek did not often appear in the curricula of most schools.

²⁷ Tilley, “Greek Studies in England”, 230.

²⁸ Tilley “Greek Studies in England in the Early Sixteenth Century (Continued)”, *The English Historical Review*, 53, 211, (July 1938): 441.

²⁹ Neil Rhodes, “Marlowe and the Greeks”, *Renaissance Studies*, 27, 2, (April 2013): 201; Cambridge University Library, [Add. 8915](#), verses presented by Cambridge students to Elizabeth I, 1564.

³⁰ Tilley, “Greek Studies continued”, 452.

Greek in School Statutes

In practice, Greek, it will be noticed, is mentioned in statutes from time to time; Hebrew is far less common – Archbishop Holgate’s school in York is believed to have been one of the first schools in England to require the teaching of Hebrew.³¹ The Greek fables of Aesop were nearly always present as a beginner text for the lower forms, but this was in Latin translation; it was used to practise reading Latin rather than Greek, though Elyot would have Aesop read to children in Greek.³² The dialogues of Lucian often appear amongst the required readings and in scholars’ notebooks, but again, this was in translation from the Greek.³³ Once Greek is mentioned, usually as a linguistic requirement of the schoolmaster, it is almost never mentioned again. At Hawkshead, the master was to teach ‘the prynciples of the Greek tongue’, but more detail is given to describing the religious instruction of the boys than to the teaching of grammar, and so we have no idea how much time was actually devoted to studying Greek.³⁴ Descriptions of a school’s curriculum might discuss and elaborate upon the Latin component of that curriculum in varying degrees of detail, but not on the Greek instruction, if it was there. The boys at Rivington school were allowed to bring their copy of the New Testament to church in the language they knew, which could have included

³¹ E.N. Jewels, *A History of Archbishop Holgate’s School 1546-1946*, (London: Archbishop Holgate’s Society), 1963, 13. Jewels believes that Hebrew became ‘quite widespread’ in the curricula of sixteenth-century schools, but this is difficult to believe, considering it appears in statutes even less frequently than Greek, and that Greek was hardly a common subject in most schools, let alone Hebrew.

³² Elyot, *The Boke Named the Governour*, fol. 31 v.

³³ See, for example, BL Add. MS 4379, William Badger’s notebook, for a passage of the dialogue between Prometheus and Jove, f. 117 r-119 r; Baldwin, *Shakspeare’s Small Latine*, 323.

³⁴ Borthwick, Bp. Sch. 25, 3, Hawkshead School foundation charter.

Greek for the very advanced boys, since Rivington gives us somewhat more detail on how the boys would have gone about learning Greek, through authors like Euripedes and Isocrates and, by 1617, John Chrysostom, although it is introduced into the description very bluntly and with no sense of which grammar was used to teach the basics of the language.³⁵ The rules for the King's School, Canterbury, 1541, required that only Latin and Greek were to be spoken by the boys while they were in school. Speaking Latin makes sense, as we have a good idea of how that language was taught, but how the boys were supposed to speak Greek in school if the statutes so rarely mention it is very puzzling. The Canterbury schoolmaster was also supposed to know both Latin and Greek, and the sixth form at the school read Homer, but there is no mention in the rules of Greek grammar being taught.³⁶

Latin instruction, which was so familiar to those who taught it that it could have been mentioned in rules or foundation documents with very little detail, is often spelled out in detail, yet Greek, which was far less familiar, is frequently not mentioned at all after its initial introduction in passing. The timetable for Hertford school, drawn up in 1616, *does* incorporate Greek into its schedule, and we can see the time devoted to Greek grammar, and to translation out of Latin; it receives less than a quarter of the time given to Latin study.³⁷ How do we account for the way in which Greek is discussed in school statutes? It may simply be an idealistic

³⁵ In Baldwin, *Shakspeare's Small Latine*, I, 348; Lancashire RO DDX94/163, miscellaneous documents relating to Rivington and Blackrod school; when the master of Rivington, John Aymsworth, resigned in 1617 he was required to give back the the school and to the governors 'Three of St Chrisostome's workes and two dictionaries'.

³⁶ "The Re-foundation of Canterbury Cathedral and Grammar School", in Leach, ed., *Educational Charters and Documents*, 459.

³⁷ BL, Add. MS 33578, Papers Relating to the Free Grammar School at Hertford, 1616-71.

statement on the part of the school's founder, one meant to indicate the humanist curriculum of the school; it is mentioned once but not thereafter because there was no definite assumption that it would be followed through in practice. This might be because of the capacity of the boys to learn the language, or of the schoolmaster's knowledge of the language: the schoolmaster of St Paul's, and later of the Merchant Taylors' School also, was required to be a man studied in Greek, but only, as we will later see, 'if such may be got'.

How to Teach Greek – Texts

Based on those school statutes and rules which do discuss Greek instruction in any detail, reading the ancient Greek authors seems to have been the main way of practising the language, whether or not reading their work was the end goal of Greek instruction. The upper-form boys at Ruthin (1574) practised their Greek by reading Lucian, Homer, Isocrates, and Xenophon; no mention is made of the New Testament. Greek is discussed in an almost 'theoretical' fashion in the Ruthin statutes, as the boys learned Greek grammar, and discussed how Latin was translated into Greek, or 'Greek problems' (something assigned to the lower forms).³⁸ It is not clear whether they used the same texts for these 'problems' as they did to practice reading Greek; the rules list no other books for the purpose. A further source of Greek material came from Erasmus's *Adagia*, his collection of four thousand proverbs and aphorisms, whose context and meaning Erasmus explains, many of which were taken from Greek authors, whom Erasmus

³⁸ "Ruthin School rules", in Sylvester, ed., *Educational Documents*, 112, 114.

identifies in the text – the *Adagia* was a source of both material for commonplace books as well as for Greek phrases. Wakefield lists Isocrates, Demosthenes, Hesiod, and Homer as required reading for Greek study (a smaller canon of books than for Latin), but no New Testament; Wakefield, interestingly, warns against the master rushing the students on too quickly from verse-writing to Greek, and from Greek to Hebrew or logic: frustratingly for our purposes, Hebrew is mentioned once, and never again.³⁹

A detailed timetable is partially extant for Winchester College from 1528, but the sixth- and seventh-form timetables are missing, and those are the forms which would be learning Greek, if it was taught at the school. Lucian and Aesop were read in the third form, but those were in translation.⁴⁰ If Lucian appeared on the list of required authors, he was probably in Latin translation, since Erasmus and Thomas More made the first major, widespread Latin translation of Lucian's works in England in the early 1500s.⁴¹ Lucian was read more for his style than his subject matter, and Thomas Becon wanted him banned from the school curriculum as 'ungodly' – considering the exchange between Zeus and Ganymede in the 'Dialogues of the Gods', this is understandable; while Lucian wrote in a range of genres, it was his dialogues which were most commonly read, but the schoolmaster was likely to have chosen only the most morally suitable ones for use in the classroom. Edward VI read Lucian, however, in addition to Xenophon,

³⁹ Borthwick, Bp. Sch. 46, foundation charter and statutes for Wakefield School.

⁴⁰ "Eton and Winchester timetables", in Leach, *Educational Charters and Documents*, 448-451, 448-449; Orme, *Medieval Schools*, 124.

⁴¹ Goldhill, *Who Needs Greek?*, 44. Lucian was widely read in Europe, but his name was also a term of insult, as he was known to have been an atheist (Goldhill, 44-45).

Demosthenes, and the New Testament.⁴² Edward, then, was being taught to read the New Testament in Greek, as well as the classical authors, by his Protestant tutors.

Westminster School, in 1560, required its master to teach all three learned languages, and from the second form upwards, Greek authors – Lucian, Plutarch, Demosthenes, Homer, and Aesop – figure prominently, initially in translation, however, since the teaching of Greek grammar began in the fourth form. The seventh, highest, form, was meant to study both Hebrew and Greek, and while there is no mention of the New Testament, the seventh form boys were to have a lesson on the psalms in Hebrew and Greek.⁴³ A religious motivation for learning Greek and Hebrew is present here, but it is overshadowed by a focus on classical authors, yet Anthony Grafton and Lisa Jardine claim that the Greek New Testament was often the beginning text used to teach Greek, especially in the sixteenth century, before moving on to the classical authors discussed above.⁴⁴ This statement, however, is not borne out by many of the sources discussed in this chapter: in descriptions of what should be read in order to teach Greek, it is classical, pagan, secular authors which dominate. It is possible, however, that the New Testament was such an obvious choice of text from which to learn Greek, so obvious that it was not worth mentioning because its use would be almost taken for granted. Yet other Christian texts, which might have been useful in studying Greek, were not nearly as popular in the classroom as classical ones: using the Greek church fathers to teach the language was tried out by some humanist

⁴² Goldhill, *Who Needs Greek?*, 46.

⁴³ “Westminster School statutes”, in Leach, *Educational Charters and Documents*, 499, 509-10.

⁴⁴ Grafton and Jardine, *Humanism to the Humanities*, 110.

teachers, such as the French grammarian Clenardus in 1531, but that method did not take hold, just as John Colet's curriculum of patristic Latin authors did not take root at St Paul's.⁴⁵

Early Christian Greek authors were not among those who had informed the style of the great Latin orators who formed the backbone of the humanist curriculum, and, as discussed elsewhere, their works were more theological in nature, and thus potentially more controversial than classical, secular, authors. When Alexander Nowell was headmaster of Westminster school in 1543, his students read St Luke's Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles in Greek, one day a week. The grammar text he used is not mentioned, but it was likely by Nicholas Clenard, whose Greek grammar was published on the continent in 1530, or by the Swiss humanist Jakob Ceperinus, whose grammar was published in 1522. Under Nowell, the dialogues of Lucian and Mosellanus were used to prepare students for study of the New Testament: here, reading Scripture in Greek was the aim of learning the language. T.W. Baldwin says that starting with the New Testament was usually the case, and that the classical authors were taken on next, later in the curriculum.⁴⁶ This would make sense: given that the New Testament was such a familiar text, it would be an ideal starting point for learning a language; Blackburn school read it in 1597 along with the standard body of classical Greek texts.⁴⁷ Ian Green argues that Greek grammars such as that written by Clenard (or Clenardus), published in Louvain in 1530, were the first Greek texts studied in many schools, followed by Aesop in Greek, Isocrates' speeches, and finally Homer for very

⁴⁵ Grafton and Jardine, *Humanism to the Humanities*, 112.

⁴⁶ Baldwin, *Shakspeare's Small Latine*, I, 178-9.

⁴⁷ Garstang, *History of the Blackburn Grammar School*, 43.

bright students – where is the New Testament here? Green also states that ‘few of the Greek works published regularly for use in schools had any Christian significance’, beyond perhaps the Greek versions of Nowell’s Catechism and the Prayer-Book Catechism, and that of those who studied Greek to only a moderate level (i.e. most of those who learned it), the main goal was to speak the language, and learn poetry and oratory from it, rather than to study the Bible; the emphasis on the classical Greek authors in many descriptions of grammar school curricula would seem to support this.⁴⁸

The 1582 edition of Clenardus’ Greek grammar, explained in Latin, largely uses classical examples and annotated excerpts from classical literature, but also contains the Lord’s Prayer, in Latin with an interlinear Greek translation, the Creed, and table graces.⁴⁹ It is, then, an example of both classical and Christian uses of the Greek language. This same 1582 edition was also the first edition of Clenardus’ grammar to be printed in England. The study of Greek, then, was a component of the humanist training in rhetoric, as students learned how and from whom the great Latin authors had developed their rhetorical style. While the place of Christian texts in this process is less certain, they would have been a natural place to begin the study of a new language, since they would have been familiar to the students already.

While a standard Latin grammar was adopted for use in all grammar schools as early as 1540, the Greek equivalent took much longer to appear. The more limited use of Greek compared to Latin, and the time which could

⁴⁸ Green, *Humanism and Protestantism*, 192, 258-9.

⁴⁹ Clenard, *Institutiones linguae graecae*, 313-19

realistically be spent on it in most schools were among the main reasons for this, as was the difficulty in procuring and correctly using Greek typeface: in an early Greek grammar text by Thomas Linacre, the *De emendata structura latini sermonis libri sex* (1524), the author asks the readers' forgiveness for the uneven quality of the printing because of the compositor's unfamiliarity with the Greek type.⁵⁰ When William Camden's *Institutio graecae grammatices compendaria* was first published in 1595 (itself a re-working of an earlier text written by a schoolmaster at Westminster, Edward Grant, in 1574), it gradually came to be seen as the Greek equivalent to Lily's Latin *Grammar*, similar in layout and organization, and remained the unofficial standard Greek grammar well into the 1670s.

Camden's grammar was associated with Westminster school, where Camden had been headmaster, and with Eton, but was the most commonly used Greek grammar in other schools as well, after Clenard's text.⁵¹ Camden's text was about half the length of Clenard's, but covered essentially the same material, in a similar manner: the Greek alphabet, the parts of speech, syntax and pronunciation. Camden then included a list of vocabulary taken from the 'best' authors, while Clenard provided annotated Greek passages from authors such as Aristophanes, Homer, and Pindar, as well as, notably, the Greek translations, mentioned above, of the Lord's Prayer, Ave Maria, Apostles' Creed, and graces for before and after meals, which were retained in subsequent editions for at least a further thirty

⁵⁰ George Arthur Plimpton, "Grammatical Manuscripts and Early Printed Grammars in the Plimpton Library", *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association*, 64 (1933): 168.

⁵¹ Green, *Humanism and Protestantism*, 134, 258.

years.⁵² The inclusion of the Ave Maria would suggest that the previous editions of Clenard's grammar, used in Catholic countries, were not significantly changed for use in England. Lily contained 'Godly Lessons', an excerpt from Erasmus' *Christiani Hominis*, and Lily's own *Carmen de Moribus*, while Camden's text lacked this religious material.

How to Teach Greek – Methods

The methods used to teach Greek, in addition to the sorts of texts used to teach it, will also clarify the purpose for which it was taught. We know a great deal more about the methods employed to teach and practise Latin, but the methods of Greek instruction were similar to those for Latin. Most Greek texts were imported from the continent until the 1580s, making them more expensive than the Latin texts which could be printed in England, and the Greek typeface required to print the language was difficult to come by for English printers – it was not until 1582 that the grammar of Clenard, which had appeared on the continent fifty years earlier, was published in England, explained in Latin.⁵³ The use of print may have helped make good Latin texts more readily available, but it did not have the same effect with Greek. There were Greek texts printed in England, particularly from the 1560s onward, including the New Testament, the classical authors which were read in the schools such as Homer, Demosthenes, and Hesiod, as well as later Christian Greek authors such as St John Chrysostom

⁵² Camden, *Institutio graecae grammaticae compendiaria*, sig. L4 r.- Q2 v.; Clenard, *Institutiones linguae graecae*, 313-19, 320-62.

⁵³ Green, *Humanism and Protestantism*, 257.

and St Gregory Nazianzen; Greek translations of Cato and of Nowell's Catechism were also printed in England, as well as the grammars of Clenard and Camden. Complete dictionaries of the language were not widespread, and the teacher was expected to 'expound' the poetry, speeches, orations, drama, and letters of the Greek authors. The teacher explained the text, the pupil read it, and might memorize some of it, noting the faults of a particular author, in order to avoid them himself, and their virtues, in order to imitate them.⁵⁴ This was Vives' theory, at least, of how to teach Greek. In practice, the teacher might summarize the text, perhaps drawing out the moral lesson to be learned, although many just taught the gist of a text, even if it was scandalous and immoral in nature, which probably contributed to John Stockwood's sermon of 1579, expounding Matthew 9:35 on the subject of Christ's work in teaching and instructing people in the gospel, against such 'vile and filthy books' being used in the schools, to 'the infection and corruption of youth'.⁵⁵

While it was very common for schoolmasters to write texts which supplemented the standard Latin grammar text, it was far less common for them to do so for Greek grammar.⁵⁶ Similarly, commonplace books compiled by schoolboys tended to contain less in the way of Greek material, being mostly in Latin. John Wright's commonplace book from 1607, for instance, contains a poem written in both Latin and Greek, but is mostly filled with Latin material.⁵⁷ The

⁵⁴ Vives, *De tradendis*, 144-146.

⁵⁵ Grafton and Jardine, *Humanism to the Humanities*, 113; John Stockwood, *A Very Fruitful Sermon Preched at Paules Cross the tenth of May last, being the First Sunday in Easter Terme* (Thomas Dawson, 1579), preface (n.p.), EEBO.

⁵⁶ Green, *Humanism and Protestantism*, 245.

⁵⁷ BL Sloane MS 833, commonplace book of John Wright, scholar of Kingston Grammar School, 1607.

poem nonetheless indicates the practice of ‘versifying’ found in most statutes. The notebooks and commonplace books kept by university-educated students are more likely to contain Greek passages; the commonplace book of John Greaves, compiled c. 1627, well after he had finished school, contains passages of Greek, Hebrew, and even Arabic alongside the Latin; this, however, was the notebook of someone with advanced training in languages, well beyond the capacity of most grammar school boys.⁵⁸

Greek literature did reach western Europe, and was translated for a wide audience, but was still, despite being ‘the humanists’ favourite new subject’, just a marginal subject, one learnt very well by some, but often as an extra subject on their own time, not one which took a firm hold in the schools.⁵⁹ The numbers of Greek teachers were in short supply, mostly to be found within the universities, so just finding a suitable teacher could be an obstacle to the spread of the language; by 1561 the statutes of Merchant Taylors’ School in London still required Greek of its schoolmaster ‘if such may be got’, the exact same requirement as at St Paul’s, whose statutes were copied by the Merchant Taylors’ School – this was perhaps to be expected when Colet used this term in his St Paul’s statutes in 1512, but the fact that it was still used fifty years later shows that by the 1560s one could still not always expect a schoolmaster to know both Latin and Greek.⁶⁰ Richard Mulcaster at Merchant Taylors’ and Thomas Ashton at Shrewsbury were both schoolmasters who had been at university when Greek was becoming more established in the curriculum; Ashton read the Greek New Testament, Isocrates,

⁵⁸ Bodleian Library, MS Lat. misc. e. 115, commonplace book of John Greaves, c. 1627.

⁵⁹ Grafton and Jardine, *Humanism to the Humanities*, 119-20.

⁶⁰ Green, *Humanism and Protestantism*, 255.

and Xenophon with his students, and taught from Clenard's grammar.⁶¹ Greek 'remained a goal for ambitious educationalists' in the sixteenth century, prescribed in the curricula for larger schools like Westminster and possibly the upper forms at Winchester.⁶² William Lily may also have taught it at St Paul's, as he had traveled to Rhodes to learn the language. It is also present in the rules and statutes for Ruthin, Rivington, and Blackburn schools, but for many other small, local grammar schools, Greek did not figure in the curriculum.

The Ideal in Practice

The main area of the humanist curriculum where Greek did take hold was in teaching the art of imitation: it helped the students to develop their Latin writing style, through understanding how the classical Latin authors had developed theirs. It was an advantage to a schoolmaster if he could understand the Latin references to Greek terms and concepts, and so 'Greek learning was preserved and adapted to fill the needs of a predominantly Latin culture'.⁶³ Yet judging by its limited presence in the statutes for many grammar schools, this was an advantage which few schoolmasters had. Did the founders of those schools whose statutes prescribed Greek know the language themselves, and in including it in the curriculum reflect their own education? Robert Holgate, Edwin Sandys, and Robert Pursglove, for instance, did attend university, and may have learned

⁶¹ Rhodes, "Marlowe and the Greeks", 201; Oldham, "Shrewsbury School Library: Its Earlier History and Organization", 53.

⁶² Orme, *Medieval Schools*, 125.

⁶³ Grafton and Jardine, *Humanism to the Humanities*, 121.

Greek there, understood its value, and subsequently prescribed it for their schools. When new cathedral grammar schools were set up late in the reign of Henry VIII, they were to teach Latin, Greek, and, at some schools, Hebrew. The three most important of these new cathedral schools, Westminster, Canterbury, and Durham, did university-level work, with readers in the three languages, civil law, and physic.⁶⁴

Some particularly zealous individuals, like Luther, found that learning the three learned languages, Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, was eminently useful, a gift from God which was necessary for religion: 'For, as the light of the sun dispels the shadows of the night, so do the languages render useless all the glosses of the fathers.'⁶⁵ One needed to understand those languages in order to properly understand the Scriptures. It would be a sin not to know God's word, since God had given humans the opportunity to learn Latin, Greek, and Hebrew. It is possible that a student who was intended for the clergy might be encouraged to study the New Testament in Greek, but that otherwise the students were directed towards more classical Greek literature as part of their training in rhetoric.⁶⁶ This was the ideal in Protestant German schools, where Melancthon's Greek grammar of 1518 made use of scriptural examples and corrected the Vulgate translation, envisioning that the students using his work would go on to read the Bible in Greek and perhaps even challenge existing authorities on the subject;

⁶⁴ Orme, *Medieval Schools*, 303-4.

⁶⁵ Simon, *Education and Society in Tudor England*, 133.

⁶⁶ Green, *Humanism and Protestantism*, 256.

Melanchthon's grammar was, however, rarely printed outside Protestant German areas because of its overtly Protestant character.⁶⁷

Perhaps learning Greek was just an ambition, or a statement made in a foundation charter to assert the nature of the school, knowing it might not be followed through. Is it possible that being 'learned in Greek and Latin', even if he never actually taught any Greek in his school, simply meant (or reinforced the fact) that a schoolmaster had to have a university degree? Greek 'failed to find a secure place in the curriculum, because it only served the needs of Latin culture. . . Competence in Greek remained the province of scholars, not the goal of schools'.⁶⁸ One could absorb Greek ideas through Latin translations or commentaries, meaning that the content and the culture of the Greek world was more, or as, important than the language itself, despite Ascham's claims for the perfection of the original language.

Only the most serious of scholars should pursue Greek studies, echoing Vives, and indeed it seems that in practice only serious scholars *could* actually do so. For some, it was just not worth the effort to learn Greek: as late as the 1590s, even the gentry, with the time and resources to learn the language, were still not convinced that learning Greek was worth the trouble. Only well-endowed schools, or schools where the master was particularly enthusiastic about the subject, or where the often expensive Greek textbooks had been donated to the school, could actually pursue the subject.⁶⁹ Even in the Italian context, whence came much

⁶⁷ Paul Botley, "Learning Greek in Western Europe, 1396-1529: Grammars, Lexica, and Classroom Texts", *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*, New Series, 100, 2 (2010): 47.

⁶⁸ Grendler, *Schooling in Renaissance Italy*, 268; Botley, "Learning Greek in Western Europe", 116.

⁶⁹ Green, *Humanism and Protestantism*, 255-6.

Greek scholarship to England, the ancient Roman world was more ‘relevant’ to the Renaissance world than that of ancient Greece, as the Italians saw themselves as the obvious inheritors of classical Roman culture.

In Lutheran and Calvinist schools, however, the situation was rather different. In Lutheran schools, the brightest students would go on to study Greek, and Hebrew, at ‘advanced secondary schools’, after they had gained a grounding a Latin, and before moving on to studying theology at university. In the Calvinist context, at the Geneva Academy, established in 1559, Greek and Hebrew were both part of the curriculum of the upper school, where boys studied to one day enter the clergy. In Scotland, too, ministers were required to have a university education, including instruction in Greek and Hebrew, in order that they be able to correctly interpret the points of Scripture that they expounded in their sermons. In these cases, Greek, as well as Hebrew, were considered necessary elements in the training of clergy; these elements of the humanist curriculum were studied primarily for their religious value, and not necessarily by all schoolboys, but they had a specific place in the curriculum, rather than in England where Greek, and Hebrew as we shall shortly see, were only taught as and when time and pupil ability allowed.⁷⁰

By the end of the Elizabethan period, and into the Stuart period, some of the smaller English grammar schools were starting to require that the schoolmaster know Greek, and some might list the grammar and texts to be used to teach it. Merchant Taylors’ School was regularly teaching Greek in 1607, but, to examine students in the language, the texts required were the New Testament,

⁷⁰ Goodare, *State and Society in Early Modern Scotland*, 174; Green, *Humanism and Protestantism*, 269, 278.

Aesop's *Fables*, or something else by a 'very easy' Greek author.⁷¹ Greek was still not up to the same level as Latin even then, and while here we see the New Testament being mentioned in the context of teaching Greek, it was chosen because it was an 'easy' text. Greek was an ideal part of the curriculum, but not always a reality in even the most well-established schools. Ancient Greek literature was becoming increasingly available, but in Latin translation, which raises a very important question: was reading Greek literature, or Latin literature for that matter, more about the style, or the content? Our earlier question of why one should read classical authors as part of a Christian education may have a different answer when it comes to reading them in translation. The reader would get something different out of the texts if they were in translation: they would not be reading the works for their admirable style of composition, but for their content and subject matter; a different lesson is learned from the texts if they are read for their content rather than for their style. Sixteenth-century ideas about pedagogical methods would change too, if students could have bilingual textbooks from which to learn these classical texts, as opposed to texts solely in Greek or Latin.

Hebrew

Hebrew is even less evident than Greek in the curricula for most grammar schools, and may also be just a statement about the learnedness of the master and the nature of the school, as in the case of Holgate's school and Guisborough

⁷¹ Green, *Humanism and Protestantism*, 255. Later in the seventeenth century, however, John Brinsley, and later still Charles Hoole, recommended starting the study of Greek by translating the New Testament, particularly the Gospel of John as it was considered the easiest (Green, *Humanism and Protestantism*, 256).

school. The Hebrew language was more difficult to teach in England, as there would be even fewer people who knew the language well enough to teach it. Italian printers produced Hebrew books; many Jews lived in Italy, where they could be called upon to teach Hebrew, unlike in England, but were also viewed with suspicion, as, by extension, was their language.⁷² Elsewhere on the Continent, Erasmus and Melancthon encouraged the teaching of Hebrew in the universities of Germany and the Low Countries, while Sturm encouraged Hebrew study, but in one's own time, and did not advocate teaching it in school. Giggleswick, Yorkshire, also required the three languages (with Hebrew mentioned last), with Latin to be spoken in the classroom.⁷³ It was taught in the universities through the sponsorship of individual scholars, and appears alongside Greek in the timetable for Westminster in 1560 for reading psalms, but even by the beginning of the seventeenth century, leading schools like Westminster, Merchant Taylors', and St Paul's (but not, it seems, Eton or Winchester) were teaching Hebrew regularly, but only to the top forms, and sustained by the enthusiasm of particular teachers.

In the 1600 statutes for Blackburn Grammar School in Lancashire, 'some Hebrew gramar or spalter [sic]' was only to be taught 'if any be willing and fit thereunto', and among the 'English Stock' of titles published in England at this time, no Hebrew texts were included.⁷⁴ The people who mastered Hebrew tended to be from 'godly' families, usually with a clergyman father; otherwise, it was

⁷² Grendler, *The Roman Inquisition and the Venetian Press*, 140.

⁷³ Bp. Sch. 17, 2, Giggleswick School statutes.

⁷⁴ Garstang, *History of the Blackburn Grammar School*; Green, *Humanism and Protestantism*, 259-60.

more common to learn it in the first years of university, but England was slower in implementing this than on the Continent (though Cambridge was required to have a Hebrew professor in the 1540s), and it was mostly, though not solely, pursued by those intended for a career in the church or for further study.⁷⁵

What we can see from a study of Greek in the grammar schools is that, in practice, it was the content and subject matter of the ancient Greek texts, rather than their writing style, which received the most attention from both teachers and students, as these could be, and were, absorbed through translation into Latin, which was quite widespread, even though the style of the Greek writing was meant, in theory, to aid imitation of the Latin authors whose style had been informed by Greek literature. Greek authors were part of the humanist body of texts with which anyone with experience of the humanist curriculum was expected to be familiar; in other words, they were still theoretically part of that shared cultural knowledge which grammar schools boys possessed in this period. But schoolboys were able to progress far further in Latin than they did in Greek, so the Greek language was not being put to the same purpose as Latin and was not being practiced with nearly the same level of rhetorical training as was achieved through Latin. What this chapter also illustrates is that a key element of the ideal humanist curriculum was only making a partial impact in English schools; the grammar schools adopted a humanist curriculum, of that there is no doubt, but it was a humanist curriculum which was, in the majority of schools, missing an ostensibly important element.

⁷⁵ Green, *Humanism and Protestantism*, 260-61.

CHAPTER 7

EDUCATION FOR WHOM, AND FOR WHAT?

In our previous chapters, we have examined the grammar school curriculum, arguing that despite the important role the schools played in promoting uniformity in religion and obedience to the English church, they were teaching an essentially secular, classical, curriculum. They were following, in a perhaps more diluted form, the humanist programme of education, which trained students to exercise authority through the professions, both secular and ecclesiastical, or in government, whether local or national. The *ars grammatica* and the *ars rhetorica* of the humanist curriculum could be used to teach active citizenship, and to instill a commitment to being a productive member of society. But how did these ideas work in practice, given the types of offices one could hold, the inclusivity of the grammar school curriculum, and the extent to which an educated person would use their education? Finally, the humanist curriculum aimed to produce ‘active citizens’, ready to play a part in governing their society, armed with their rhetorical skills and sense of duty. But who were these active citizens, and to what extent had their education shaped the way they thought of their duty to society and the way in which they approached their eventual career? In other words, how do these humanist theories and methods of education match up to what we know about office-holding and entering public or professional careers in this period?

This chapter will begin by examining how far down the social scale educational opportunity reached, and by extension, how inclusive the concept of active citizenship was. This is followed by a discussion of the early seventeenth-century alarm over the apparent problem of over-education, and some of the new ideas which were put forward about what education should involve. Despite these new ideas, the humanist pattern of education persisted well past the mid-seventeenth century, and so it is worth understanding what constituted an educated person, according to the humanist definition. Did such educated people exist, and in what capacity could they use their education? One way to put one's education to use was through holding some form of public office, and so the chapter will finish by looking at the extent to which the grammar schools were in fact preparing their students for office-holding, and also whether grammar school education always needed to be a prerequisite to holding office. Because many types of public office did not require a humanist education, and because the influence of this type of education was felt beyond the grammar schools, the divide between Latin and vernacular learning, although significant, was not necessarily an elite one.

Grammar schools aimed to prepare their students for service to the public good, and to inform the way they thought of duty and service, but a humanist education was not always a pre-requisite for every type of public or professional career. Based on what we have already explored regarding the curriculum and the experience of attending an English grammar school in this period, we can begin to answer some of these questions, about what constituted an 'educated' person in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and to what extent the grammar schools

were concerned with preparing their students to successfully contribute to English society.

The Social Inclusivity of the Grammar School Curriculum

How far down the social ladder did grammar school education filter, whether directly or indirectly? In other words, how separate were the learned and the unlearned cultures, the Latin and the non-Latin? A possible way to think of this might be to ask who would have understood the classical references in the drama of the time. Who understood the references because they studied those texts in school, and who understood them because they had read a translation or had a vague familiarity with the authors and their works? While the figures of Roman history and the stories related by Roman authors were familiar, even in a vague sense, to a wider range of people through translations, an actual detailed knowledge of this literature and the understanding that one could apply it to one's own life was reserved for a smaller range of people.¹

Demographic studies by David Cressy and Lawrence Stone have all come to similar conclusions about the availability of education in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, arguing that it filtered down well into the middling sort. Though these studies are now a few decades old, historians can still generally agree that grammar school education reached down as far the middle sort of people, but, when school founders spoke of the 'poor' as deserving of educational opportunity, they were referring to the 'respectable, employed, and even skilled

¹ Freyja Cox-Jensen, *Reading the Roman Republic*, (Leiden, Brill, 2012), 215.

artisans or peasants’, and not to the ‘indigent, unskilled, barely employed masses’: the expansion in educational opportunity did not mean education for all.² These groups of people, however, who were in theory able to participate in the education provided by the grammar schools, were not a large proportion of the population. Cressy estimates that seventy percent of the population were of the rank of husbandman and below, using the term ‘peasant’ in a very loose sense, while Stone gives a figure of ninety percent of the population being below the gentry level.³ These figures would give us the impression that approximately one quarter of the population had at least the opportunity, given their socio-economic standing, to receive an education in a grammar school; this figure becomes smaller, however, when we take into account that only the male population had this opportunity, that this figure includes the sons of the nobility and gentry who might be being tutored at home, and that not all parents of the middling sort were necessarily able or willing to send their sons to a grammar school.

In terms of the number of schools, this is difficult to determine before the 1540s when chantry and song schools began to disappear, and grammar school foundations, or re-foundations, became more permanent establishments. Nicholas Orme has estimated, roughly, that there were approximately four hundred grammar schools in England before 1548 (based on ten for each county), one hundred of which were founded between the fourteenth century and 1530. By mid-century, we can name at least fifty more, based on Orme’s list covering up to 1530 and the schools for which I have evidence between 1530 and 1550.⁴ Cressy

² Cressy, “Educational Opportunity”, 303.

³ Cressy, “Educational Opportunity”, 313; Stone, “Social Mobility in England”, 20.

⁴ Orme, *Medieval Schools*, 167, 346-372.

then gives a figure of one hundred thirty-six new foundations in Elizabeth's reign, and eighty-three under James I, yet there is a dropping-off in the numbers of new schools after James' reign, perhaps part of a general dying-down of the keen Tudor interest in founding schools, with fifty-nine grammar schools established under Charles I.⁵ So we do see an expansion in the number of schools, but an expansion which was building on an already substantial number of educational establishments dating from the later middle ages. The numbers of students in each school are more difficult to determine, as they might vary considerably and are not always specified or recorded: we know that Eton and Winchester were each to have seventy scholars, yet the maximum number for St Paul's was one hundred fifty-three. The register for Rivington School in the 1570s lists one hundred fourteen boys, while around the same time, the Merchant Taylors' School in London had a maximum of two hundred and fifty students, while Shrewsbury had nearly three hundred. Most schools would not have been so large; Shrewsbury is certainly unusual in having so many students, Merchant Taylors' was in London serving a larger population, and the number for St Paul's was a maximum one. Some of the smaller grammar schools, on the other hand, might have had closer to twenty or thirty students.⁶

The population of England was between three and four million in this period, and the proportion of this population who would have been school-aged was approximately forty percent. This figure is taken from Laslett, who gives a fairly consistent figure of forty percent for the years 1539-43, 1569-73,

⁵ Cressy, *Education in Tudor and Stuart England*, 8, 10.

⁶ Carlisle, *Concise Description*, II, 50, 75; Kay, *Rivington and Blackrod School*, 40-42.

1595-1605, and 1629-33.⁷ The estimated numbers of schools in these years, from approximately four hundred in 1541 to nearly seven hundred by 1631, are those taken from Orme and Cressy discussed above. The average number of boys in a given school, estimated here at fifty (allowing for both the large schools of over one hundred students, and the smaller ones which taught between twenty and fifty boys at a time), is multiplied by the number of schools, and this figure is divided by the number of the male school-aged population of the middling sort and lower gentry. These results indicate, approximately, that close to fifteen percent of the school-aged population was attending grammar school in the four five-year periods given above. Lawrence Stone, W.K. Jordan, and Keith Thomas give a much smaller estimate of the number of boys entering the universities by the 1630s, only two and a half percent.⁸

While grammar schools were not confined only to the elite, there was still an assumption that the education which they provided was what properly constituted ‘education’, to the exclusion of more elementary, vernacular, education. One could be literate and read English material but not be among the Latin-educated, so the literate population was not the same as the Latinate population. Yet it was difficult to separate the Latinate and the learned: when Richard Mulcaster states in his *Positions* that one must not accept an ancient author’s authority on its own, but also consider its relevance to one’s present circumstances, he still speaks of the ‘learned’ and ‘Latin’ as if they obviously

⁷ Peter Laslett, *The World We Have Lost – Further Explored* (3rd edition, London: Methuen & Co, 1983), 107, 111. The age-group figures include those between age 4 and 25, so slightly beyond school-age, and have been divided by three to obtain the numbers of those aged approximately 7 to 14.

⁸ Stone, “The Educational Revolution”, 57; W.K. Jordan, *Philanthropy in England 1480-1660: A Study of the Changing Pattern of English Social Aspirations* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1959), 291; Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic*, 4.

went together.⁹ In her study of the compilation of commonplace books, Mary Thomas Crane argues that the gathering of phrases and fragments of classical texts constituted a ‘common cultural capital...through which all educated subjects were framed’; students gathered (‘framed’) sayings from an already-approved range of texts or collections of phrases (such as Erasmus’s *Adagia*) and used them to inform their own writing, thereby indicating that they had ‘received the prescribed education’ and were familiar with the process of humanist learning.¹⁰ The boys in the grammar schools were initiated into this humanist world, and this ‘initiation’ would have occurred in very similar ways all across England, because of the ways in which schools modeled themselves on other schools and tried to follow what the leading grammar schools were teaching. The Roman histories read by every grammar school boy played a key role in the creation of an ‘English latinate culture’, of seeing the world through the lens of classical ideas about politics and government.¹¹ This was not going to be relevant for everyone, but with so many translations and vernacular Roman histories, ‘ancient history [says Freyja Cox Jensen] was now an English concern’.¹² Latin and vernacular education were envisioned as very separate, but exposure to a Latinate education was not solely confined to an elite group. A detailed knowledge of the body of texts and an experience of interpreting them filtered down so far, and a general vernacular understanding would have filtered down further still.

⁹ Mulcaster, *Positions*, 23, 11-12.

¹⁰ Crane, *Framing Authority*, 6, 8.

¹¹ Cox-Jensen, *Reading the Roman Republic*, 1.

¹² Cox-Jensen, *Reading the Roman Republic*, 216.

While the statutes of grammar schools might state that they wished to let poor boys in as students, and while educational opportunity was by no means confined to the very wealthy, in practice it was still limited, and wealthier children were in some places crowding out the poorer ones. For example, the Orders and Regulations for St Alban's School, drawn up in 1570, state that 'poor men's children shall be received into the said School before others', and yet by the 1630s, the school's governors were complaining that wealthy parents were paying to have their children receive more attention from the master, to the detriment of the poorer students.¹³ Even the colleges of Eton and Winchester were originally intended to include children from middling backgrounds, but this was not always followed through in practice. The landed elite were more frequently represented in the English schools than they were on the continent.¹⁴ While they may have complained that the university curriculum was insufficient to meet the needs of those called to 'govern', the wealthy seem to have found that the grammar schools were a way forward towards a career in government, because now the government of England required more educated men for its governing and administration.¹⁵ School rules sometimes state that the schoolmaster was not to accept payment, or extra payment, from any of his students, to avoid favouring the wealthy, yet this practice still occurred. The grammar school curriculum, whether it was taught in the schools themselves, in the cathedral schools and colleges, or by private tutors, was creating a divide between those who knew the literature taught in the school

¹³ "Orders and Regulations for St Alban's School, 1570", printed in Carlisle, *Concise Description*, I, 516, 518-19.

¹⁴ Green, *Humanism and Protestantism*, 76.

¹⁵ J.H. Hexter, "The Education of the Aristocracy in the Renaissance". *Journal of Modern History*, 22,1 (March 1950): 4, 15.

and its applicability to contemporary society, and those who did not, but given that the grammar schools were not open only to those at the very top of the social hierarchy, this divide was not strictly an elitist one.

The boys at the very top of the social hierarchy, in fact, were not always attending the grammar schools: we know they were attending universities and the Inns, but before they attended these institutions, where did they receive their education? The sons of the gentry and minor nobility were attending grammar schools, and do appear in lists of students where such lists are extant, but in far smaller numbers than those of lower social status. For example, the Shrewsbury School register contains a significant number of boys from the gentry, between approximately five to fifteen percent of the student population of around three hundred boys, between the 1580s and 1610s. This information is taken from the Shrewsbury School register, which lists the newly admitted boys for each year, alongside their entrance fee, which varied according to their social status: there is a category specified for a lord's son (10s), but it is the categories of knight's son (6s 8d), gentleman's heir (3s 4d), and gentleman's other son (2s 6d) which are better represented and make up the five to fifteen percent figure given above.¹⁶ Shrewsbury, however, was a school with a high reputation, attracting students, including both first and younger sons of the gentry, from across England.

The list of Rivington School, a much smaller school, contains the son of a local landowner, Sir Francis Rivington, but he appears to be the only one who can be identified as such on this list. The sample of thirty-one boys from the matriculation records for Gonville and Caius College, mentioned in Chapter Four,

¹⁶ E. Calvert, *Shrewsbury School Regestum Scholarium, 1562-1635* (Shrewsbury: Adnitt & Naunton, 1892).

includes twelve boys who were the sons of esquires, gentlemen, and knights, nine of whom are listed as having attended a school, rather than receive tutoring at home, while the matriculation records for Cambridge as a whole provide a similar picture; of a further thirty boys whose school and father's background are given, fifteen are listed as the sons of gentlemen, knights or esquires.¹⁷ Some sons of noble or gentry families might attend grammar school for only a few years, having first received some instruction in grammar from a tutor at home; this is what Philip Sidney and Fulke Greville did, both of whom attended Shrewsbury, attending grammar school for a shorter period of time than many of their lower-born classmates, and moving on to university to study but not take degrees. The sons of the gentry did not stand to benefit from a grammar school education in quite the same way as boys of the middling sort, as they had other means of making their living and did not depend on their education for a career, yet they were still attending the grammar schools, following a similar educational path as those of the middling sort.

While in theory those in charge of providing education, such as school founders, might desire a wider range of students to have the opportunity to benefit from a grammar school education, there was still a gap between theory and practice. It was rare to attend school simply out of interest; there was an expectation that you would be able to make use of your education: 'beyond the most elementary level the educational system was normally closed to those without the resources, the time, the contacts, or the wealth necessary to make use

¹⁷ Venn, *Alumni Cantabrigiensis – Part I: From the Earliest Times to 1751*, II.

of it'.¹⁸ Ideas of cultivating students' natural abilities and training the most promising boys for the common good were only able to flourish in a limited capacity; their education was meant to reinforce, not alter, the established social hierarchy, in order to avoid the problem of over-education of which Francis Bacon would later complain.

Was there a difference between the education for the city and for the country? London, for example, had more schools than any other city in England. Because of its size, this is to be expected, but we could also say it was more diverse than most smaller places in terms of the types of education it could provide: it is in London that we most frequently hear of teachers of accounting and other mathematical skills not taught in the grammar schools. The urbanization witnessed in England between 1540 and 1640 led to the creation of a 'corporate culture', or a 'culture of citizenship', argues Phil Withington, with the 'city commonwealth' reflecting the *republica anglorum*. This urbanisation was in a literal, demographic, sense, albeit limited in that even by the start of the seventeenth century only 8% of England's population was living in urban centres (and most of that 8% was in London), but also in the sense of more towns petitioning for greater rights and liberties, resulting in an increase in the number of communities with royal charters of incorporation between 1540 and 1640 and the resulting 'corporate' identity that this could produce.

So then, were the grammar schools teaching for an urban context, and for service within that context, even the little country grammar schools?¹⁹ The urban

¹⁸ Cressy, "Educational Opportunity", 313.

¹⁹ Laslett, *The World We Have Lost – Further Explored*, 55; Phil Withington, "Putting the City into Shakespeare's City Comedy", in Armitage, Condren, and Fitzmaurice, eds., *Shakespeare and Early Modern Political Thought*, 198, 202.

context of which Withington speaks included smaller towns and boroughs of a few thousand people, and grammar schools were established in both urban areas and in small towns and villages, so these ideals of citizenship were not only present in urban schools. This further develops Patrick Collinson's argument that English people in this period were still subjects, not citizens, in the sense that the nature of English conciliar government did not allow them to fulfill their role as 'active citizens' to the same extent as their classical predecessors had done, but the humanist training in active citizenship could be put to use on a much smaller, more local, scale.²⁰ The humanist curriculum was applicable to governing towns across England; Withington says that this 'civic aristocracy' (which was not literally the aristocracy, but rather those chosen to govern based on merit) prevailed across the country.²¹ In Withington's description, those who governed the towns and cities seem to have been chosen from all but the very poor, which is similar, as we will see, to the image Mark Goldie has presented of local government being fairly broad in its inclusivity. Even a small community needed people to hold office, and these were not always, says Goldie, formally educated men. So this culture of urban citizenship was applicable to smaller towns too, it seems, only on a smaller scale, and it was not always necessary to have attended school in order to participate in this culture.²²

Concerning how far down the social scale the grammar school education filtered, one related question, asked at the time, seems to have been how socially

²⁰ Collinson, "The Monarchical Republic of Queen Elizabeth I", 38.

²¹ Withington, "Shakespeare's City Comedy", 203.

²² Withington, "Shakespeare's City Comedy", 202; Mark Goldie, "The Unacknowledged Republic: Officeholding in Early Modern England", in Harris, ed., *The Politics of the Excluded, c. 1500-1850* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001), 161-3, 172.

inclusive active citizenship should be. On this point there was disagreement. Schoolmasters and humanist scholars and educational writers said it should be inclusive: William Kempe believed that even elementary education was capable of training future citizens and statesmen; Thomas Smith in his *De Republica Anglorum* took a similarly inclusive view. John Brinsley did as well; when he spoke of active citizens and the commonwealth he was mainly thinking of local government, but this was nonetheless important: ‘we are they to whose charge... Church and Commonwealth is committed... We are they who helpe either to make or marre all; for that all the flower of our Nation, and those who become the leaders of all the rest, are committed to our education... if we bring them up aright, there is great hope, that they shall proove goodly lights, and marks to all the rest of the Land, especially, to the townes and countries where they are’.²³ On the other hand, Archbishop Whitgift, during the opening of Parliament in 1584, spoke of the ‘troubles in kingedoms’, which were caused by lack of due respect for the laws and ‘many orators’, foreshadowing Francis Bacon’s later concern about the spread of education; Whitgift, however, was known to have had a high regard for church hierarchy and authority, being at odds with radical Calvinists and those who wished to debate church doctrine, so perhaps his complaint was more to do with the spread of unorthodox ideology and differing opinions than about an actual surplus of orators.²⁴

²³ William Kempe, *The Education of Children in Learning*, (Thomas Orwin, 1588), EEBO, sig. E2 v.; Peltonen, “Political Rhetoric and Citizenship in *Coriolanus*”, in Armitage, et al, eds., *Shakespeare and Early Modern Political Thought*, 236-9; David Armitage, “Shakespeare’s Properties”, in Armitage, et al, eds., *Shakespeare and Early Modern Political Thought*, 25-43, 27; Brinsley, *A Consolation for our Grammar Schools*, (1622), EEBO, 45.

²⁴ ‘Herald’s account of opening proceedings, 23 November 1584’, in T.E. Hartley, ed., *Proceedings in the Parliaments of Elizabeth I* (2 vols., London: Leicester University Press, 1995), II, 20-1.

At the beginning of the seventeenth century, contemporaries perceived a new problem, that of over-education at the grammar school level. The education which had been encouraged as the cure for society's problems in the sixteenth century was now seen to be the cause of those problems in the seventeenth. Did the successful proliferation of the free grammar schools in the sixteenth century create this over-abundance of education? Certainly there were more schools, and good reason to attend them, so educational opportunity had increased by the beginning of the seventeenth century. Richard Mulcaster, while he advocated a basic, practical, education for all, had only approved of education beyond a basic level for a certain number of people, taking into consideration the needs of the country. In other words, while parents might want their son to receive an education, one must put the requirements of the country first, in order to 'restraine the overflowing multitude of scholars', which, according to Francis Bacon only a few decades later, was apparently becoming a reality.²⁵

Francis Bacon believed there were too many grammar schools in England, creating people 'unfit for other vocations and unprofitable for that in which they are brought up', educated above their status and unable to do what they were originally brought up to do, which in practical terms would lead to a lack of people willing to serve as apprentices or servants. It was also causing idleness among people whose education over-qualified them for the more humble positions they might otherwise have held, and 'there be more scholars bred than the state can prefer and employ'. Bacon saw this as a threat to order (this despite the fact that education in England, whether elementary or humanist, was not trying to

²⁵ Mulcaster, *Positions*, 141.

overturn the social order), and would rather that the money used to endow the newly founded Charterhouse school have been put towards university education: he could evidently accept the gentry attending grammar schools, universities, and the Inns, but not the growing numbers of grammar schools open to those of lower social standing.²⁶

Bacon also complained that humanist educational methods were more concerned with plucking nice phrases from texts rather than with understanding their subject matter, and that its authoritative rather than empirical nature was less useful and less serious than subjects like history or natural history.²⁷ Early in Elizabeth's reign, the number of gentlemen attending universities was beginning to increase, as they realized that exercising authority in government now required further education in the humanist pattern. By the 1620s, among the gentry who were filling central government offices, roughly half were known to have attended university, or the Inns, and approximately half of these men were of the rank of esquire or knight.²⁸ There is also evidence, discussed above, that a greater number of sons of the gentry were attending grammar schools, for at least part of their formal education.²⁹

But while the sons of the gentry were attending the universities in greater numbers, by the end of the sixteenth century and the beginning of the seventeenth,

²⁶ Bacon, "Advice to the King Touching Sutton's Estate", in Spedding, et al, eds., *The Works of Francis Bacon: Volume II*, 252-54.

²⁷ Mark H. Curtis, *Oxford and Cambridge in Transition, 1558-1642: An Essay on Changing Relations Between the English Universities and English Society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1959), 115.

²⁸ G.E. Aylmer, *The King's Servants: The Civil Service of Charles I 1625-1642* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1961), 272-74.

²⁹ Curtis, *Oxford and Cambridge in Transition*, 127.

gentlemen were finding that the arts course at the universities was fit for those whose status forced them to enter a paid profession, but not for gentlemen with an inherited responsibility to govern; a legal education at the Inns of Court was better suited to this. It was even proposed in the 1560s and 1570s by Sir Humphrey Gilbert and Sir Nicholas Bacon that there be special schools to fit the needs of the aristocracy and gentry to prepare them for service in government, by teaching subjects like modern languages and natural philosophy alongside the traditional humanist curriculum; while the universities began to introduce modern languages as extra subjects in the 1630s, nothing significant came of the proposed schools in this period.³⁰ Sons of the gentry continued to attend both universities more and more frequently towards the end of the sixteenth century, but not necessarily to take a degree; most would spend a year or two at university and then move on to one of the Inns of Court.

Bacon was not just concerned with the numbers of educational institutions, but with the *type* of schools: education according to people's status was intended to reinforce the social order, allowing for only a limited social mobility. It was the number of grammar schools of which Bacon complained, but the number of students who proceeded from those schools to university was problematic in that the universities were producing more graduates than could find jobs suited to their level of education. The Elizabethan church had required more trained clergy, and this drive to increase the numbers of university-trained ministers had, by the early decades of the seventeenth century, resulted in around one hundred people per year who were in excess of the vacancies available in the church. The universities

³⁰ Curtis, *Oxford and Cambridge in Transition*, 127-8, 144.

had been ‘too successful in carrying out their primary task of training men for service to church and state’, with the number of graduates from both Oxford and Cambridge having tripled between the 1560s and the 1620s. In the case of those who left university intending to join the clergy, then, there was an over-abundance of those able to earn their living in a way appropriate to their education.³¹ This perceived problem of over-education tapered off after the Restoration, as both educational opportunity and civic office-holding became more elite.³²

The humanist curriculum, and the network of grammar schools to teach it, persisted with only minor alterations until at least the middle of the seventeenth century, and, at many grammar schools, even well into the eighteenth.³³ Richard Mulcaster proposed that the ‘system’ current in his day be replaced with more vernacular instruction, for a wider range of children, and including subjects beyond simply Latin and Greek, yet these changes were not made. Educational theorists like Samuel Hartlib and John Dury (neither of whom were originally from England and both of whom came from very strict Protestant backgrounds) advocated in the 1640s a more universal education: by ‘universal education’, they did not propose opening up the grammar schools to all children, but insisted on an education consistent with one’s social standing, whether that meant a basic instruction in reading to avoid idleness, or instruction in practical subjects besides Latin, or a full humanist education, but their ideas did not take hold in mainstream educational theory. Hartlib envisioned four types of school, ‘the First for the Vulgar, whose life is to be Mechanical...the Second for the Gentry and Nobles,

³¹ Curtis, “Alienated Intellectuals”, 27, 29-32.

³² Stone, “Social Mobility in England”, 44-45; Goldie, “The Unacknowledged Republic”, 171.

³³ Green, *Humanism and Protestantism*, 83.

who are to beare Charges in the Commonwealth...The Third for Scholars, who are to teach others, Humane Arts and Sciences...the Fourth for the sons of the Prophets, who are a Seminary of the Ministry'.³⁴ Hartlib's vision, in other words, would provide education for a wider range of the population, but would perpetuate social divisions by ensuring that children of different backgrounds received an education which was suitable to their social standing.

On the continent, Comenius had similarly new ideas about how to approach education and how to break away from the traditional humanist curriculum perpetuated by grammar schools. His theories and texts had some success in continental Europe, and while his works were eventually published in England in the 1650s, the English grammar schools still adhered to a curriculum which by the mid-seventeenth century still looked very similar to what was being taught fifty or even a hundred years earlier. Any new subjects tended to remain on the margins of the curriculum: university students might begin to do extra reading in subjects like modern languages, history, and geography, but these were mainly sons of the gentry who felt they needed these subjects.³⁵ Some grammar school libraries contained books on a range of subjects, but there is no indication that they were part of the main curriculum; they were perhaps read on the side by those who were interested, or even just by the schoolmaster. Shrewsbury School library, for instance, contained books on theology, history, law, maths, and medicine, but these were not subjects actually mentioned in descriptions of the

³⁴ Samuel Hartlib, *Considerations Tending to the Happy Accomplishment of Englands Reformation in Church and State* (1647, no publisher), EEBO.

³⁵ Curtis, *Oxford and Cambridge in Transition*, 131, 136.

curriculum.³⁶ The pattern of practising Latin through themes and disputations, and reading a largely unchanging body of classical texts, remained the basis of the grammar school curriculum throughout the period we are concerned with here, with very little change. The textbooks used to teach Latin had changed by the 1540s, but the rest of the programme of study, in terms of the authors being read and the means of teaching those authors, was not significantly different in the 1620s than it had been at the beginning of the previous century, and the definition of what it meant to be ‘educated’ remained largely unchanged throughout the Tudor and early Stuart period.

Defining an ‘Educated’ Person

What was an educated person in this period, and does this definition reflect the curriculum and teaching methods we see being presented in the grammar schools? When we look at the intentions of school founders and their reasons for founding a school, they frequently speak in very generic terms of bringing children up in learning and virtue, to be well-mannered as well as well-versed in Latin. In descriptions of the curriculum, there is no indication of *why* the scholars are supposed to be learning the authors and works listed: there is no stated intention that this curriculum would prepare them for a profession, or to hold office; perhaps it was simply assumed that this was what the curriculum was meant to do, and so widely understood that it was not necessary to explain the eventual aim and benefit of that curriculum. When we look more closely at the

³⁶ Oldham, “Shrewsbury School Library: Its History and Contents”, *Transactions of the Shropshire Archaeological Society*, LI (1941-43): 54.

books which were listed for use in particular schools, usually listed by author rather than title, we can see that the curriculum was heavily influenced by Roman ideas about government and fulfilling of duty and holding of office; in this regard, I agree with Peltonen, Goldie, and Armitage that the language of classical office-holding was informing the students through the texts they read, and would shape the way they thought about holding office and the way they approached their careers.

When we look at what the students were putting into their notebooks and commonplace books, however, whether because the schoolmaster told them to or through doing their own reading, the material being collected in those books was as much general moral aphorisms and grammatical notes as it was political wisdom. Thus perhaps we should not over-emphasise the extent to which the grammar schools prepared students for office-holding – a political influence was there in the curriculum, but moral and grammatical material was presented just as prominently. Official school documents such as rules and foundation charters also tend to emphasise the religious element of education, and yet the descriptions of the ideal curriculum and the surviving notebooks which reflect this curriculum show a more classical, secular, approach existing alongside.

An educated person in this period thus received a great deal of classical knowledge, despite the more Christian aims of the school he had attended. Based on what we have already discussed in Chapter One, we can state that in theory, an educated person knew Latin and ideally Greek. He would be able to read in those languages, and demonstrate a familiarity with the ‘best’ ancient authors, in terms of subject matter, writing style, and the lessons to be drawn from their works. He

would be able to write in those languages, whether letters or verses. He would be able to deliver persuasive speeches and arguments with the appropriate gesture and tone; he would be eloquent. He would be familiar with the technique of keeping commonplace books, and would have a ready store of commonplaces to use in a speech or a piece of writing, and to live by, taken from authors originally studied in school. By reading the wisdom of the ancient Greeks and Romans, he would be prepared to be a good citizen, able to participate in the governing of his society with his excellent communication skills. This definition, and the methods of fulfilling it, persisted well into the seventeenth century; the stated aim of the grammar school at Dorchester-upon-Thames as late as 1652, for example, was to understand Latin and Greek grammar, the authors who wrote in those languages, and how to write in prose and verse. There is no specific mention in these statutes of rhetoric and speaking well, and nor do the rules ever mention any time spent in disputations, but the aim of this school was still very much the same in 1652 as it was in schools founded in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries.³⁷

In practice, however, how commonly did educated people actually live up to this definition, and did they have an opportunity to put their education to use? Some of the elements of their education were less widely applicable, unless they continued down the academic route: Greek, for example, was only useful if one planned to study it further, or intended to read Greek texts in their original language, or for a further source of commonplaces, something Vives had foreseen in the 1520s. Making verses might be useful, on certain occasions. Composing letters would be a useful skill, and rhetoric, even if practised in English rather than

³⁷ BL Add MS 25426, statutes and ordinances for Dorchester School, 1652.

Latin, was always going to be relevant when one needed to be persuasive, whether in writing, in a letter or a petition, or orally, as in giving a sermon, arguing a legal case, welcoming a patron to the university, or, as Peltonen has argued, in a parliamentary speech.

The humanist curriculum as it was originally envisioned, in fifteenth-century Italy, has been described as being vast and unwieldy to all but the most dedicated scholars: the humanist curriculum which was taught in England's grammar schools was a significantly boiled-down version of this, leaving out much of the background, contextual, knowledge which Italian humanists had insisted their students read, and leaving out the regular study of Greek.³⁸ This education was more manageable and more suited to the needs of its students with its emphasis, not on the endless contextual details of the Roman texts, but on understanding the Latin, imitating it, and drawing upon the texts used to teach that Latin to inform one's own writing and speech – communication skills delivered through the edifying and authoritative medium of classical Latin and Greek. It has been illustrated recently by Peltonen, and less recently by Keith Thomas, that MPs were writing speeches as they had learned to do in school: they wrote about subjects like tax and tyranny while in school because those were subjects the Romans had covered, and later in life, their grammar school education was demonstrably providing them with skills which they actually put to use.³⁹ On the other side of this was someone like Shakespeare, as T.W. Baldwin has so

³⁸ Grafton and Jardine, *From Humanism to the Humanities*, 1-28.

³⁹ Peltonen, *Rhetoric, Politics, and Popularity*, 54; Thomas, "The Meaning of Literacy in Early Modern England", in Gerd Baumann, ed., *The Written Word: Literacy in Transition (Wolfson College Lectures 1985)* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), 108.

thoroughly argued, putting his education to use in the content and style of his plays: the humanist curriculum influenced both political and creative occupations.

We can see these skills being practised and cultivated in commonplace books and notebooks. As a source of phrases and figures to use in one's speech and writing, commonplace books illustrate that, in theory at least, the wisdom of the Greek and Roman authors was there to inform one's actions and way of life. The commonplace book of John Wright, a student at Kingston (likely Kingston upon Thames) Grammar School, compiled in 1607 shortly after Wright had completed his education there, provides a very detailed illustration of the range of texts with which a grammar school boy might be familiar, as well as the process of compiling a commonplace book. Wright's book is very well-organized, with the contents of the book listed on the first page. His commonplace book is not just a collection of phrases, although these do form a large proportion of the material, but it is a varied collection of commonplaces from prose works listed by topic (with a special section for excerpts of Cicero's work), lines of verse organized by author, a practice oration in Latin, a translation of an entire Latin text into English, and finally a poem, written in both Latin and Greek, which may well be of Wright's own composition. In this book, therefore, we see reflected the reading and the methods of practising Latin and rhetoric which comprised a humanist education.

Some of the book's material is fairly predictable for that of a schoolboy: Cicero's *De officiis*, *De amicitia*, *De senectute*, as well as his *Paradoxes* and *De somnio Scipionis* all feature prominently, but in both the original Latin and in English translation, reading as an exercise in Cicero's compositional style as well

as a source of commonplaces; the *De officiis* also appears as an exercise in translation, Wright having translated the conclusion to the book, containing Cicero's exhortation to his son to learn from the work, and copied it out in its original Latin. Virgil merits his own section under '*Flores diversarum poetarum: breviter collectae*', with phrases on human ability, victory, and war and peace, taken from the *Eclogues*, *Georgics*, and the *Aeneid*, all three of which were standard reading by schoolboys.

Ovid is treated in a similar manner, with lines of verse from the *Metamorphoses*, *De ars amandi*, and *De tristibus* on the subjects of the goodness and infallibility of the gods, silence, liberty, and mediocrity, while the *De coniuratione Catilinae* of Sallust is here mined for *sententiae* and elegant phrases, which are also translated: 'It is better to become famous by witt than riches'; '*silentio vitam transire*' ('to live in obscurity'). Lucan's *Pharsalia*, on the Roman civil wars, and Plutarch's *Moralia* (in Latin, not the original Greek), also appear among the texts with which Wright demonstrates his familiarity. The book ends with an English translation of Seneca's *De vita beata* and *De providentia*, copied out in their entirety: both of these texts were dialogues, the dialogue form being a common way to teach Latin. The book even ends with a poem, in alternate Greek and Latin verses, which may be of Wright's own composition.

So far, the contents of Wright's book seem representative of the authors read in the grammar schools, and the types of material he includes (dialogues, verses, and orations) reflect the humanist education that boys from the middling sort and up could theoretically have shared. Wright's book also contains, however, some more obscure authors: there are two sections of *loci communes* at the

beginning of the book, on a wide range of subjects arranged in an roughly alphabetical order, such as benevolence, fortune, goodness, knowledge, memory, moderation, and piety, and drawing on a similarly wide range of authors. Socrates, Democritus, Diogenes, Pythagoras, Scipio, Aristippus, Aristotle, Anaxagoras, and Xeno all contribute commonplaces, although Wright does not indicate from which work he has taken these quotations, which are in some cases phrased as paraphrases rather than direct quotes. Both an in-depth knowledge of certain classical works is indicated in this book, as demonstrated in the cases of Cicero, and Virgil, and Seneca, as well as a wide, but perhaps less systematic, reading of the Latin and Greek authors which appear in the beginning of the book. Wright has pulled out moral commonplaces useful to live by and, importantly, to insert into a speech as a familiar concept to engage the audience and to demonstrate one's understanding of the topic at hand, both from the standard works by which he would have practiced his Latin, as well as a much wider range of authors he would have encountered when he became more proficient in Latin.⁴⁰

The themes for which Wright has collected material are neither strongly classical nor strongly Christian, yet most of his phrases and sentences were taken from classical authors – most, but not all. Among the *flores* taken from poetry, Wright has drawn material from fifteenth- and sixteenth-century authors. The heading 'Ex Palingeno' quotes Palingenius's *De zodiacus vitae*, while 'Ex Dubarta' contains phrases from Guillemme du Bartas' *Divine Weeks*, an epic poem about the creation of the world which became popular in England; both authors provide wisdom on the subject of 'time'. These are much shorter sections than

⁴⁰ Peltonen, *Rhetoric, Politics, and Popularity*, 83-5.

those on the classical authors, but they are there, indicating the presence of near-contemporary authors in the curriculum of Wright's school. In addition, Baptista Mantuanus, the 'Christian Virgil', also makes an appearance: 'Ex Mantuo' draws upon Mantuan's *Eclogues* for the subjects of simplicity of life, experience, and vigilance ('melior vigilantia somno': 'watchfulness is better than sleep'). There is little indication of what Wright intended to do with his carefully-organized phrases and sententiae, but the book does indicate his familiarity with the texts read in school and implies an understanding that here were some conventionally acknowledged sources of wisdom, relevant not only to making speeches, but also to one's everyday life.⁴¹

In a similar vein, while the themes and dialogues the boys wrote to practise their Latin might be on topics relevant to both the classical and the early modern eras, they were further informed by the classical material the boys read, both in terms of subject matter and purpose. For instance, the notebook of William Badger, a student at Winchester in the 1560s, provides us with a sense of how the students' day-to-day reading was absorbed and made 'useable' and relevant. It contains dictations from the schoolmaster on both strictly classical themes, and on ideas directly relevant to the boys' circumstances, yet supplemented by quotations from classical authors, particularly Virgil and Cicero: a dictation might discuss something as simple as being able to go outside to play, but the importance of finishing their work before doing so was impressed upon the boys through a Latin quote, usually from a text they were in the middle of reading.⁴²

⁴¹ BL Sloane MS 833, commonplace book of John Wright.

⁴² BL Add. MS 4379, William Badger's notebook; Baldwin, *Shakspeare's Small Latine*, I, 321-42.

Education for Office-Holding?

By our above definition, an educated person in early modern England had been initiated into a humanist cultural knowledge, and one of the things they were expected to do with that knowledge was put it to use for the public good. This could be done through entering a profession, or through holding some form of public office. According to Mark Goldie, there were many opportunities to do this: ‘More than half the male population could expect to hold public office in their lifetime, and the moral language of office-holding spread well beyond formal offices to embrace even the practices of the poet and dramatist’⁴³. The proportion of the male population who could expect to attend a grammar school was a somewhat lower figure than those who held office. Much of the recent secondary literature on rhetoric and its relation to education argues that the grammar school curriculum was meant to prepare boys for office-holding, for ‘active citizenship’.⁴⁴ Certainly, they were informed through their reading about how to exercise authority and carry out duty, through the types of texts they studied, which were often political in nature. The civic life was informed by the grammar school curriculum, through classical and humanist ideas about good citizenship and participation in government. ‘Office-holding’ was a wide-ranging term, which encompassed roles in local government, or in Parliament, or in state administration, or the church; in short, it involved taking on a public, not a

⁴³ In Armitage, et al, eds., *Shakespeare and Early Modern Political Thought*, introduction, 10.

⁴⁴ See in particular Peltonen, *Rhetoric, Politics, and Popularity*, and Armitage, et al, eds., *Shakespeare and Early Modern Political Thought*.

private, role, which contributed to the smooth running of society on a local or national level. Here, both the professions, as well as offices which did not fall into the professional category, will be discussed, since the later career of a schoolboy could fall into either category.

Among the earliest extant school lists from Rivington School (dating from 1575-76) contains the names of one hundred and fourteen boys, only twelve of whom we have details concerning their later careers; these twelve, however, will still serve as useful examples of the careers eventually entered by grammar school boys. Five of these Rivington scholars entered the clergy, and two studied law; one may have founded another school, two others were known to have been school governors, and one studied medicine.⁴⁵ In other words, they entered the professions, and largely those professions which were university-trained and required either a good command of Latin, or well-honed speaking and writing skills more generally. Further evidence of grammar school boys entering the professions is found in the records of Winchester College scholars who proceeded to New College, Oxford, where we can see the predominance of professional careers over a wider period of time, as the *Liber Successionis et Dignitatis* covers the period 1386 to 1640. The information is not always complete, and only records the careers of those students who completed their degree. One must also remember that Winchester is an example of a more prestigious school than most, but we can observe that until about the 1530s, theology was the most common direction for the scholars, while after that period, more boys started to go into law than theology, and an increasing number took MA degrees.

⁴⁵ Kay, *Rivington and Blackrod Grammar School*, 43-4.

The students' careers began to vary somewhat more in the latter half of the sixteenth century, as we see medical doctors appearing more frequently, Regius Professors in Greek and Hebrew, and, increasingly by about the 1620s, the occasional soldier, head librarian, and university chancellor – most of these careers required academic rather than mechanical skill; in other words, the skills acquired in the grammar schools.⁴⁶ There was a close link between education and 'political prosperity', a humanist idea which 'the English had quickly embraced' – the speeches given by the MPs in Parliament were directly linked to the style of speech-making, or oratory, they had learnt as boys in school.⁴⁷ They had been prepared in terms of the subject matter, the style of delivery, and the structure and format of the oration in the classical style, and they put these skills of persuading and informing to use in a practical sense upon leaving school. Giving speeches in Parliament was one way to put this rhetorical training to practical use, as was the use of oratory in giving sermons as a member of the clergy.⁴⁸

It was believed that classical history paralleled contemporary events, the former being used to understand the latter, which stemmed from the humanist veneration of classical literature as the standard to which to aspire. When determining the best way to fulfill these roles, people in the early modern period looked to ancient authority: Eric Nelson argues that while political writers from Plato's day onwards had debated over what was 'the best state of the commonwealth', the early modern period was unique in saying that the answer

⁴⁶ Winchester College Archives, 21584, *Liber successionis et dignitas*, 1386-1640.

⁴⁷ Peltonen, *Rhetoric, Politics, and Popularity*, 30.

⁴⁸ Peltonen, *Rhetoric, Politics, and Popularity*, 131-32; Mack, *Elizabethan Rhetoric: Theory and Practice*, 253.

was to be found in Roman history.⁴⁹ Classical texts and methods of teaching rhetoric had originally been used for political ends, and they were used in this way in the grammar schools also.

Teaching grammar was a first step towards teaching rhetoric, which, because rhetoric would be used by people who were in office in some capacity, was a means of learning active citizenship. Yet – and this is an important ‘qualification’ when stating that the grammar school prepared students for office-holding – ‘people in office’ could include a wide range of people, even the tradesmen and craftsmen who participated at the parish level in vestry meetings and acted as churchwardens on a rotational basis, filling those local offices because it was expected of them, because it was their turn to do so. In early modern England, political participation was exercised through office-holding, from the very prestigious to the smaller-scale and local: Goldie refers to an ‘unacknowledged republic’, meaning the members of companies and corporations, guilds, vestries, etc, who, though their particular ‘office’ might be very humble, were nonetheless playing an important role in the governing of their community.⁵⁰ This is important to remember: people went into a local ‘office’ because the community expected them to, not because they were educated; ‘officeholding was simply coextensive with being a citizen’.⁵¹ These lesser offices of the active citizen did not require the training in rhetoric provided by the grammar schools, and nor, in some cases, did the person holding them even need

⁴⁹ Eric Nelson, “Shakespeare and the Best State of a Commonwealth”, in Armitage, et al, eds., *Shakespeare and Early Modern Political Thought*, 253.

⁵⁰ Goldie, “The Unacknowledged Republic”, 153.

⁵¹ Goldie, “The Unacknowledged Republic”, 170.

to be literate.⁵² Keith Thomas has provided a number of examples of illiterate mayors, masters of city companies, town councillors and other office-holders, arguing that one did not have to be literate in order to be politically conscious.⁵³ Goldie does not seem to include professions like schoolmaster or clergyman, for instance, in his definition of ‘offices’, even though they contributed to the public good; such positions, as we have seen, *did* require the full humanist curriculum, while public offices, even though they might be informed and understood by that same curriculum, did not always require it. Thus, the fact that offices could be held by nearly anyone, not just the well-off or the well-educated, somewhat distorts the pattern of education as preparation for active citizenship, because not every office-holder received, or needed, this education.

So, one did not have to be educated to take up public office, necessarily. But for those offices which *did* require an education, were the grammar schools preparing their students to take up those offices? We have already noted Goldie’s figures on the number of offices which could be held in this period, that half the male population could potentially hold office during their lives; half the male population is a much larger figure than the male population who would have attended a grammar school. Public offices and the holding thereof were understood through the *studia humanitatis*, in the sense that this programme of study prepared people for public office, in part because of its emphasis on rhetoric, but also in terms of the way in which the classical texts read within this

⁵² Goldie, “The Unacknowledged Republic”, 163. Goldie also states that before the mid-seventeenth century half of all rural constables were illiterate, and that even in the city, someone fairly poor might hold a minor office at some point in their lives (“The Unacknowledged Republic”, 172).

⁵³ Thomas, “The Meaning of Literacy”, 103-105.

humanist curriculum discussed the importance of office and duty.⁵⁴ The *studia humanitatis*, and its emphasis on rhetoric, was ‘a guide to political life’, as the ‘Elizabethans and Jacobeans were [according to David Armitage] politically closer to the ancient Greeks and Romans’ than to later, more modern, political thought; the concept of the ‘commonwealth’ was understood as an Anglicised *res publica* because of the many opportunities to hold public office.⁵⁵ The ancient history read in the schools as a vehicle for teaching Latin was used as a means of understanding contemporary events and policies; the events surrounding the end of the Roman republic were particularly useful for this purpose, argues Freyja Cox-Jensen, as students were pointed in the direction of examples both ‘to illustrate moral lessons’, and to understand the ‘causes of things in order to reflect upon contemporary society, and the world in which men lived’. Caesar’s *Commentaries on the Civil War*, Lucan’s *Pharsalia* (on the subject of the civil war), Plutarch’s *Parallel Lives*, and Sallust’s *Conspiracy of Cataline* are among those which were most frequently read; Sallust in particular appears often in lists of authors to be read.⁵⁶ For the schoolboy just starting to learn rhetoric, ancient history formed the basis of themes and letters, providing both the subjects for his compositions as well as the perspectives from which to write them, as he imitated the voices of various historical and mythological figures.⁵⁷

But while the historical and political uses of ancient history may have been appreciated by some upon finishing school, particularly young university men,

⁵⁴ Armitage, *Shakespeare and Early Modern Political Thought*, introduction, 11.

⁵⁵ Armitage, *Shakespeare and Early Modern Political Thought*, introduction, 3, 10.

⁵⁶ Cox-Jensen, *Reading the Roman Republic*, 49-53, 108, 214.

⁵⁷ Peltonen, *Rhetoric, Politics, and Popularity*, 54.

there are certain significant examples of grammar school students who did not use their humanist learning for political purposes, putting it instead to more literary ends. When looking for a window onto the sixteenth-century grammar school curriculum and experience, historians often turn to what Shakespeare's education must have been like; his work has also been extensively studied for influences of his education. But, while his plays and verse can be a very useful reflection of how the grammar school curriculum could be appropriated and used by one who studied it, and while using a well-known historical figure can provide us with extant work and a definite biographical context in which to set it, Shakespeare's career was in fact fairly atypical of what was intended for a school-boy after leaving grammar school. While it reflects the literary knowledge absorbed through classical texts, it does not entirely reflect the lessons on duty and fulfilling of office which he would have learned from those same texts; Shakespeare's humanist knowledge was channeled in a very different direction from what was typically intended for a schoolboy.

Shakespeare also did not hold office, even a humble or short-term one, which would have been expected of him, despite having the financial means to meet these obligations. David Armitage uses Shakespeare's father John as an example of how holding office could be dependent on how much property one held rather than on one's education – John Shakespeare climbed through the ranks of local office, from constable to chief alderman of Stratford, but he had sufficient property wealth, and its accompanying status, to be able to do this.⁵⁸ His son had this too, along with his shares in the playing-companies, but he lacked the local

⁵⁸ Armitage, "Shakespeare's Properties", 28.

authority, not owning property in London, and remaining, to use Sir Thomas Smith's term, a 'private man' rather than holding office, and his plays are described as demonstrating an ignorance of local government and office-holding.⁵⁹ One would have to be even more careful using Marlowe's work as a window onto what a grammar school boy was learning, because even though he was even more educated than Shakespeare, it has been argued that Marlowe's plays demonstrate less a reflection of the texts and ideals absorbed in school, than a subversion of those ideals, and an approach to the classical school texts which would have been at odds with a schoolmaster's approach.⁶⁰ The career of Christopher Marlowe gives us a similar sense of the ways in which the ideals of a public life might be used, or not, in a grammar school boy's later life. Marlowe attended the King's School in Canterbury at around the same time that Shakespeare was attending the grammar school in Stratford. While Marlowe ended up pursuing a career as a dramatist quite unconnected to his education, his education in Canterbury and at Cambridge illustrates that, up until he began to study for an MA, the expectation for him and many of his classmates was that they would go on to enter the clergy – Marlowe himself attended Cambridge on a scholarship funded by Archbishop Parker for boys who were 'likely to proceed in the Arts and afterwards make Divinity their study', but he did not use his training for this purpose, or for any other profession.⁶¹

It appears, then, that one did not have to be grammar school-educated, or even literate, to hold office in one's local community: office-holding was not

⁵⁹ Armitage, "Shakespeare's Properties", 29.

⁶⁰ Riggs, *The World of Christopher Marlowe*, 48.

⁶¹ Riggs, *The World of Christopher Marlowe*, 70, 95-6.

always dependent on one's education level. The boys of a local area could go on to hold office once they were older regardless of whether or not they had attended the local grammar school. This is partially because local offices were held on a very temporary basis, rotated throughout the community, and, as they were not paid, they would not be a man's entire career; it is also in part because the duties involved did not always require a great deal of formal education. Thus the schools were preparing the boys for office-holding, but not all offices required that level of education. More humble offices like that of churchwarden or overseer of the poor could be held by people without any grammar school instruction. A person's character within the community was often a more important qualification: to become a governor of a grammar school, for instance, one had to be a resident of the parish, with a good reputation there; 'honest' is the term usually found in the foundation documents. When it came to certain careers, or offices above the level of local government, however, the instruction provided in a grammar school was more applicable and more necessary, and we can more clearly see that education being put to use in the fulfilling of those higher offices. This implies, then, a divide between types of offices based on education levels: a humanist education from a grammar school was preparation for the higher levels of public office, and for the professions.

If a boy went to grammar school, did it automatically follow that he went on to become a clergyman, a schoolmaster, or a lawyer? Many of those who studied at the Inns became JPs, and even MPs, in addition to the professions for which they were trained.⁶² And if he did fill one of those roles, did it

⁶² J.H. Gleason, *The Justices of the Peace in England, 1558-1640* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), 90-91.

automatically follow that he had been to a grammar school, or received the equivalent education from a tutor? As to the first question, no, grammar school did not always lead to the professions or some form of high office (to return to Shakespeare and Marlowe, who used their education for quite different purposes), but often when we do find extant lists of students, and these lists indicate their later careers, we have seen already that they entered the professions, rather than trades, which required more specific training and did not necessarily need to be preceded by time in grammar school.⁶³ But as to the second question, the answer is yes, because one needed the level of education provided by the grammar schools in order to be qualified for a profession, secular or otherwise; looking at the *ODNB* entries, for instance, for schoolmasters, clergymen, and lawyers in this period indicates that it was very common for such men to have received a grammar school education.

Yet to return to local office holders, they did not, as Goldie has demonstrated, always require a grammar school education, and some offices might be held for only a short period of time, and perhaps in addition to a career: school lists like those extant from Winchester and Rivington, examined in previous chapters, tend to list only a student's main career, usually in the church or law, with no further details on any other offices they may have held at other stages of their lives. This changed over the course of the later sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, however, as J.H. Gleason's example of JPs in 1562 and 1636 illustrates: of those JPs, in Kent, Norfolk, Northamptonshire, Somerset,

⁶³ See for example the list of students from Rivington School, given in Kay, *Rivington and Blackrod School*, 40-42, as well as Winchester College, 21584, *Liber successionis et dignitas* Chapter One also discusses in greater detail how the grammar school was not often part of the required training for careers in architecture, trade, or finance.

Worcestershire, and Yorkshire, who were active in 1562, roughly half had attended university or the Inns, while the other half were members of the gentry, knights and esquires, who had no formal ‘higher’ education. In 1636, however, between a quarter and a third of the JPs in these same six counties had never attended university or the Inns: by then, it was more common to be an educated JP, particularly as the sons of the gentry had begun to take advantage of the education provided in the grammar schools, universities, and Inns of Court. Yet there was still no formal requirement that a JP have such a high level of education.⁶⁴ What we can conclude, then (although a more thorough study of numbers of students, and a more precise idea of their eventual careers would certainly help this), is that grammar school education helped inform the ways in which office-holding was understood, and was the way forward into a professional career, but at the same time, these were not the only uses for this education, and it was not always required for entering lower-level public offices; in other words, the culture of office-holding did not always depend on it.

Grammar schools, then, were serving two main purposes in England in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries: after the Reformation, they were playing an important role in upholding the established church and spreading orthodox doctrine, and continuing to educate future clergy as they had done throughout the middle ages. But their curriculum was also preparing young men for both religious and secular offices, and instilling in them a devotion to duty and the

⁶⁴ Gleason, *Justices of the Peace in England*, 83-88.

public good. The amount of religious instruction and exposure to official, orthodox, church doctrine was also much smaller compared to what was taught in schools on the Continent. Despite the religious framework within which grammar schools operated, with their examination of schoolmasters and weekly religious instruction, the secular element of the curriculum was just as important in terms of the ways in which students understood their place in society and the roles they would one day be expected to play within it. Even the most 'godly' had a humanist education, rather than a thorough theological training. For a society which was apparently so concerned with enforcing religious conformity, the path to being an active citizen was largely a classical and secular one.

CONCLUSION

A number of trends emerge when studying grammar schools in fifteenth- to seventeenth-century England. Previous studies have already identified the fact that the sixteenth century witnessed the beginning of state concern with, and eventual control of, education, and that the Reformation did not create a sudden interest in education, but instead built upon an earlier increase in school foundations. This, combined with greater church control, ultimately deriving from the state, and the influence of humanist ideas about teaching, led to the creation of, if not an actual system of education as was seen in parts of Europe and in Scotland, then at least a more comprehensive network of grammar school-trained students who shared a similar understanding of the humanist curriculum, and had attended schools which were overseen and licensed in similar ways. A degree of uniformity in curriculum has also been identified, and is borne out not only by the existence of the authorized grammar, but also by a reading of school foundation documents, from across England, which were clearly being influenced by the foundation methods of earlier schools. But I would also raise a number of other points about the nature of grammar school education and its place within early modern English society more widely.

First, there was a great deal of continuity in terms of the grammar school curriculum, even with the influences of humanism and the Reformation. The chapters on curriculum and on who was educated and for what, in particular, illustrate the fact that the definition of what it meant to be educated changed so little over the period and the means of living up to that definition did not change

dramatically. This continuity is related to the sense of, and concern with, uniformity, found in the curriculum and administration of England's grammar schools. The continuity of the humanist curriculum, despite calls to alter it, is an overlooked factor in the study of early modern education in England. The writings of educational theorists like Ascham, Mulcaster, Brinsley and Morrice are considered good starting-points into an understanding of the curriculum of the time, and the methods and mentalities surrounding education, but, while it is clear that they were discussing theory rather than practice, it is easy to forget that they were actually not representing mainstream, conventional grammar school education, but were actually trying to challenge that norm and provide some alternative to it, well before educationalists like Dury, Hartlib, and Comenius articulated their ideas about a more widespread education which was practical for a wider range of people.

Second, this curriculum was a predominantly classical one, in spite of the Christian framework guiding the foundation of schools and the religious instruction which those schools provided. Certainly, the foundation and re-foundation of grammar schools across England was important in terms of spreading a degree of religious conformity and in training future clergymen, but those schools were teaching a largely classical curriculum, and providing a smaller amount of religious instruction than in other parts of Europe. After the middle of the sixteenth century, the English church was finding a middle ground in terms of religious doctrine, and the religious education in schools reflects this *via media* in not being as strongly focussed on religious indoctrination as we have seen was the case elsewhere in Europe, where the balance between religious and

classical instruction was more in favour of religious instruction. It is often underappreciated that there was proportionally more classical literature than Christian instruction in the English grammar schools: the Christian aims of school founders are clear enough, as is the fact that the increase in the number of schools was intended to improve Christian knowledge and understanding, but a closer look at the curriculum demonstrates that this Christian ‘framework’ was filled in with a lot more classical material than we might realise, and that instruction in the art of rhetoric sat alongside, or rather, was a part of, ‘bringing up’ children in good manners and religious understanding.

Third, grammar school instruction, in rhetoric, existed alongside, but quite separate from, other types of training, in ‘mechanical’ subjects such as mathematics and keeping accounts. While we unfortunately do not have extensive records of what schoolboys later went on to do with their education, of those that we do know, the most common route was into the professions, whether law, the church, or perhaps medicine, or into some form of government or teaching. Grammar school education, then, can be said to be the opposite to vocational training, or rather, training for a particular trade; ‘mechanical’ being the more appropriate contemporary term. But I would argue that it *is*, in a sense, training for a vocation, but for a learned (‘liberal’) profession, or a career in government of some kind, most likely local or ecclesiastical in nature, but government nonetheless; when Rosemary O’Day described early modern education as ‘distinctly vocational’, she seems to have had a similar idea in mind. The only potential problem with O’Day’s description is that it seems to leave out the fact that the social status conferred by education was as significant as the career

preparation it provided.¹ For some, a grammar school education might be merely an educated polish, but even for those schoolboys who were not from gentry families (in other words, most of them), these communication skills which were practised so rigourously in school were actually used, whether to give sermons, argue in a local court, make a speech in Parliament, or keep the peace as a JP, or to write letters or petitions. I would further argue that while there was a divide between this type of training and vernacular instruction, it was not necessarily an elite versus non-elite divide, because of how far down the social scale education actually reached.

While the work done in this thesis has contributed to our understanding of the social function of early modern grammar schools, and the ways in which they were affected by humanism and religious reform, it has also been able to open up other questions as well. The subjects of all seven chapters could be subjects of future study in their own right: some, because they are not understood in great depth yet (namely the chapters on Greek, classroom experience, education for what and for whom, and schoolmasters), or have been studied but are slowly being revised (running and funding a school, religious instruction), or already are stand-alone topics (the curriculum). The teaching of Greek in English grammar schools in this period could easily be a study all on its own. The ideal of teaching Greek is fairly well understood, but how well and how often were the schools teaching it in practice? While I have addressed the Greek passages found in the notebooks, textbooks, and commonplace books used in this thesis, a more thorough examination of the evidence of Greek teaching would be necessary in

¹ O'Day, *Education and Society 1500-1900*, 179.

order to understand the levels to which it was taught, the texts used to teach it, and which schools were including it in their curriculum; this would further illustrate the degree to which the ideal humanist programme of education, which was supposed to include Greek, was actually being followed in practice in England, and would complement our understanding of the theories of education written by humanist scholars at that time. Humanism as it manifested itself in practice in England saw only the Latin element of the curriculum fully take hold in schoolrooms, while Greek was an ideal available only to some schools and not others, a statement about what education ought to be but not always a reflection of practice. School rules and descriptions of curricula might mention Greek towards the beginning, and then occasionally go on to discuss exactly which authors would be read, and perhaps discuss the methods of teaching it, but more common, and perhaps more interesting for the light it sheds on the idealistic humanist views of Greek at the time, is to mention it at the beginning as a language the schoolmaster should know, or a language the students should learn, and then never mention it again, despite discussing in depth how the Latin element of the curriculum should be taught. The fact that we are missing something here about the ways in which Greek was taught, or indeed whether it even was taught, can be seen either as evidence that it was not taught beyond the 'great' schools or by very well-educated masters, or that it was so obvious which texts one should use to teach it that this was not thought worth mentioning.

The career of the early modern schoolmaster is a further area which has received little recent attention, and though the subject has been explored in Chapter Three, there is still potential for it to be a subject of study in its own right.

There have been studies on the professions in early modern England, which have included schoolmasters, but the fact that the names of schoolmasters are often not well-documented before the middle of the sixteenth century, when they were required to be licensed, makes studying them as a group somewhat difficult. The schoolmasters identified here, both from names in foundation or visitation documents, as well as the ones in the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, are only a small proportion of the actual numbers of schoolmasters there must have been at any one time in England. The information presented in the graph in Appendix 2 (I have not come across a similar presentation of this information), and discussed in chapter three regarding the length of a schoolmaster's career and whether or not he was married or ordained, is but a starting point into what could become a more comprehensive prosopographical study of an important but under-explored profession. It is difficult to know more about the control schoolmasters might have over which texts they read and how they approached those texts, as this was often left to the schoolmaster's discretion, if the founder did not specify; a study of the contents of school notebooks would perhaps be an effective way to approach this, as T.W. Baldwin has demonstrated with his reading of a Winchester notebook of 1565. We know already that schoolmasters were licensed and examined on their suitability for teaching, but the control schoolmasters had in practice over their own classrooms, and the ways in which they exercised this control and approached the required elements of the curriculum, is also a potential area of further study, albeit one somewhat more difficult to reconstruct.

The subject of running and governing a school could also be the basis of a study in its own right, building on my sources and the work presented here on the

numbers of schools, students, and the backgrounds of those students. The number of schools would include those founded alongside almshouses, to highlight the relationship between education and charity which was still present in school endowments, if less noticeably, after the middle ages. The numbers of elementary, or petty, schools, would be very difficult to document, as they were less permanent establishments than grammar schools, but overall, a more comprehensive list of the schools which existed in England during the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries is still lacking. Appendix 3 contains a list of all the manuscript sources I have found for the schools which feature in this thesis, in a similar manner to the list compiled by P.J. Wallis in his *Histories of Old Schools*; while Wallis' study outlines the published sources for most schools in England, county by county, it does not include many of the manuscript sources which have been so valuable to this study, and which are included in my list. A finding-list such as this, to which more schools can and certainly should be added, would complement the highly valuable but still incomplete survey of English grammar schools made by Nicholas Carlisle in 1818, as well as Nicholas Orme's list in *Medieval Schools*, arranged by county and including schools for which we have record up until 1530. I have not encountered a finding list similar to Wallis' which specifically includes manuscript sources, and read in conjunction with Wallis' study, such a list of primary material extant for particular schools would be highly valuable for future studies of early modern English grammar schools.

But what would all these lists and numbers actually tell us, besides how many schools there were in England and what sources are extant for them? When combined with the numbers of students attending these schools, quite a lot. The

estimates of the numbers of boys attending grammar school presented in the final chapter could be further refined following a better understanding of the numbers of students and a firmer knowledge of the numbers of schools present at any given time in this period. While the numbers of students attending university have been compiled with greater certainty, to this could be added the numbers of students attending the Inns of Court, or receiving elementary education in a petty school, as well as the number of grammar school and cathedral school students. This would situate grammar school instruction in the context of other types of education, both academic and otherwise, and help us to further understand how widespread it actually was compared with other methods of education and training for an occupation.

The humanist curriculum embraced so readily by the grammar schools between the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries retained a firm hold on what education should involve and what purpose it should serve in society. England's grammar schools became, in the later sixteenth century, a means of enforcing religious conformity across the kingdom, but for institutions which were meant for such a purpose, they appear to have been teaching a great deal of non-Christian material. If we actually look more closely at the curriculum, at the texts which were read and the approaches to them, we see that, to the schoolboy, the classical material was what was actually taking up most of the school day, and that religious instruction, though extremely important, was in fact taking up far less time. In promoting religious understanding and a sense of duty to society, the English church chose to achieve these aims through the grammar schools, as much, or more than, through more widespread education, through producing

‘active citizens’ through the means of classical literature. The sixteenth-century interest in, and strengthening of, the existing pattern of local grammar schools produced a large proportion of educated people (read: young men). This education filtered down much further than just the elite, but there was still a significant divide between Latin instruction and other types of education, as education which was *not* Latin did not fit with the idea of what it meant to be educated. The curriculum of the grammar schools gradually came to include other subjects besides Latin and Greek, but not until the mid- to late seventeenth century, and the classical curriculum, consciously imitating the methods of the ‘great’ schools, was still present in the grammar schools even into the early nineteenth century. It has been argued, and I would agree, that the sixteenth century was not the educational ‘revolution’ that is sometimes supposed, since this ignores the flourishing later-medieval interest in education and gives the English Reformation more credit for promoting education than it warrants. But in understanding the ways in which later education developed, it is to the early modern period, to the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, that we should look.

Appendix 1: Timetable for the Free Grammar School at Hertford, c. 1617.
Compiled from BL Add. MS 33578, papers relating to the Free Grammar School at Hertford, 1616-1671.

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
6:00-6:30*	boys arrive, followed by usher at 6:15 and master at 6:30					
6:30-11:00	-notes on the Sunday sermon -Latin or Greek grammar -repeat last Saturday's lecture -correct last week's exercises -new grammar exercises -lecture on the prose of a chosen author**	-Latin or Greek grammar -repeat yesterday's lecture and correct yesterday's exercises -new grammar exercises -lecture on the verses of a chosen author	-Latin or Greek grammar -repeat yesterday's lecture and correct yesterday's exercises -new grammar exercises -lecture on the prose of a chosen author	-Latin or Greek grammar -repeat yesterday's lecture and correct yesterday's exercises (given as homework) -8:00 a shorter lecture -10:00-11:00 construe the lecture, or write a short theme, or complete a short Latin exercise, to be shown to the schoolmaster	-a repetition of the week's work -repeat the week's lectures 'memoriter'	-repetition of the week's work (continued) -parse Friday's lecture -an exercise in making English 'vulgars' -boys 'shewe their books for phrases collected that week', as well as their writing books, to the master -disputations among the fifth and sixth forms
11:00-1:00	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	-one hour of writing	Lunch	Lunch

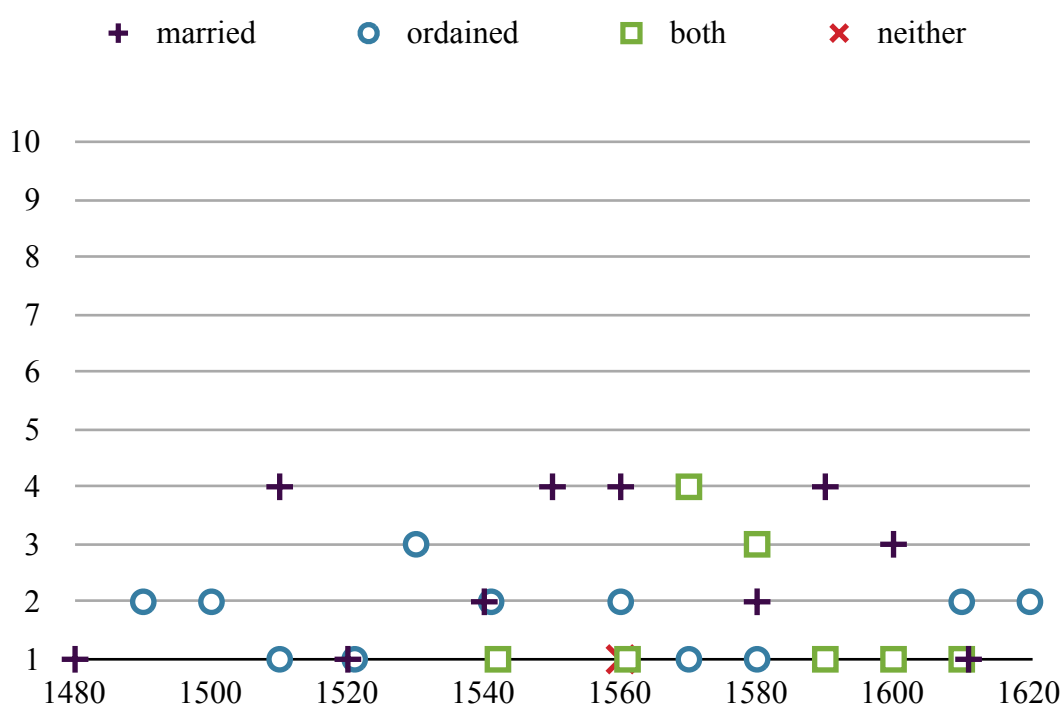
	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1:00-3:00	<p>-parse and construe morning's lectures, noting differences of phrasing between poets and orators</p> <p>- translation from English to Latin or Greek, or verses on the lecture theme</p> <p>- learn a grammatical rule to repeat the next day</p> <p>- grammatical questions and disputations among the boys</p>	<p>-parse and construe the morning's lectures</p> <p>-translation from English to Latin or Greek, or verses on the lecture theme</p> <p>-learn a grammatical rule to repeat the next day, and repeat yesterday's rule</p> <p>- grammatical questions and disputations among the boys</p>	<p>-parse and construe the morning's lectures</p> <p>-translation from English to Latin or Greek, or verses on the lecture theme</p> <p>-learn a grammatical rule to repeat the next day, and repeat yesterday's rule</p> <p>- grammatical questions and disputations among the boys</p>	<p>-a 'play day', but only if a 'worthy person' requests it for the boys.</p> <p>If the afternoon off is not granted, or there is already a holiday falling during the week, the timetable follows Monday-Wednesday pattern</p>	<p>-parsing and construing Latin (or Greek) passages until 3:00</p> <p>-boys called on to make Latin grammatical rules, or to make verses, or to identify grammatical rules</p> <p>-a lecture by the master (subject is not specified)</p>	<p>1:00-3:00 master gives a lecture out of the catechism</p> <p>-construe and parse catechism lecture</p> <p>-'declamations and verses'</p> <p>-exercises due for Monday***</p>
5:00	Home	Home	Home		Home	Home

*This is the timetable for the summer months, between March and September. During the rest of the year, school began an hour later and finished approximately an hour earlier.

**This might be given by the higher forms to the lower ones, but the schoolmaster always explained the idioms and figures.

***There were, in addition to this, prayers twice a day on Sundays and holidays.

Appendix 2: Patterns of Marriage and/or Ordination among English Schoolmasters, c. 1480-1630



*‘Married’, with no indication that the schoolmaster also held a position within the clergy while employed in teaching.

*‘Ordained’, meaning that while teaching, the schoolmaster was an ordained, celibate, priest before the Reformation, or, after clergy were allowed to marry, simply remained an unmarried clergyman.

*‘Both’ indicates a married clergyman, only possible once clerical marriage was officially allowed.

*‘Neither’ is used where it is known that the schoolmaster did not marry and did not enter the clergy. Schoolmasters for whom there is no evidence for their marital status or for whether or not they entered the clergy have been omitted from this graph.

Appendix 3- Towards a Finding List of Extant Primary Sources on Early Modern English Grammar Schools

This list contains all the schools which make an appearance in this thesis, and the primary material which I have found for each school. In some cases these sources are original manuscripts, and in others they are later, sometimes printed, versions. While it is by no means a complete list of either the schools in England or the sources extant for each school, it is the kind of finding-list which may be of use in future studies of early modern grammar schools in England and Wales, building on the list compiled by P.J. Wallis in his *Histories of Old Schools* (1966), which contains largely secondary sources and school histories as opposed to primary material.

Almondbury (1608)

-letters patent, 1608, in York, Borthwick Institute for Archives, Bishopthorpe School Papers, Bp. Sch. 2.

Blackburn (Chantry-1514)

-foundation deed 1514 in John Garstang, *A History of the Blackburn Grammar School* (Blackburn: North-East Lancashire Press, 1897).

-foundation argreement 1514, in Lancashire Record Office, Preston, DDBK 1/1.

Blackburn (Grammar-1567)

-statutes 1600 in Garstang, *A History of the Blackburn Grammar School*.

-letters patent 1567, Lancashire RO, DDBK 1/3.

-decree regarding school's disendowment under the Chantries Act 1585, Lancashire RO, DDBK 4/2.

-memoranda of money, deeds, and orders concerning payments by scholars 1591, Lancashire RO, DDBK 3/9.

Blackrod (1586)

-miscellaneous documents 1560-19th c., Lancashire RO, DDX 94/163.

Blisworth (1503)

-the inhabitants of Blisworth, Northamptonshire v. Francis Wiggington Schoolmaster, 1593, The National Archives, Kew, E134/36Eliz/Hil10.

Brentwood (1558)

-foundation charter 1558 in *English Historical Documents 1485-1558*, ed. David C. Douglas (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1967).

Bristol (1533)

-ordinances and rules (c. 1533) in Nicholas Carlisle, *A Concise Description of the Endowed Grammar Schools of England and Wales*, (2 vols, London: Baldwin, Craddock, and Joy, 1818, reprinted Richmond: Richmond Publishing, 1972), II, 404-09.

Bury St Edmund's (1550)

-foundation charter, 1550, in Douglas, *English Historical Documents 1485-1558*;
-list of items left to the school after 1573 by master Thomas Rudd in TNA, PROB 11/55/447.

Chesterfield (1598)

-will of Godfrey Foljambe concerning school 1594/5 18th-c. copy, Bp. Sch. 11.

Daresbury (1598)

-letter to John Danyell re: erecting a free school in Daresbury, 1598, TNA, WARD 2/55/187/31.

Darlington (1567)

-foundation charter, 1567 ed. George Allen, York Minster Library.

Dorchester-upon-Thames (1652)

-statutes and ordinances for the school of Dorchester, 1652, British Library Add. MS 25426.

Eton (1440)

-Audit books concerning college expenditure and administration, c. 1500-1600, Eton College Archives
-timetable, 1530, printed in A.F. Leach, *Educational Charters and Documents* (1915); Wasey Sterry, *The Eton College Register 1441-1698* (Eton: Spottiswoode, Ballantyne & Co, 1943), 448-51.

Giggleswick (1553)

-charter 1553 and statutes 1592, 18th-c. copies, Bp. Sch. 17.

Gloucester (1528)

-Evans v Saule re: ushership of the free grammar school of Gloucester 1558-79, TNA C3/58/75.

-Grant of Letters Patent to the Crypt School, Gloucester, 1538 (Joan Cooke's will leaving land to the school), Gloucester Archives, D 3270/3,.

Grimsby (1547)

-letters patent 1547, Northeast Lincolnshire Archives, Grimsby, 282/32.

Guildford (1509)

-‘A Manuscript History of Guildford School’, early 17th c., including 1608 statutes and a list of books given to the school, Surrey History Centre, Woking, BR/OC/7/1,

-will of Robert Beckingham 1509 (later copy), Surrey History Centre, 1775/2/1-2.

Guisborough (Jesus Christ School and Hospital- 1561)

-foundation charter, 1561, Bp. Sch. 18.

-account book, 1574-1674, Teeside Archives, Middlesborough, S/GU/G 1/1.

Halifax (1585)

-royal charter and statutes 1585 17th-c. copies, Bp. Sch. 19.

Halsham (c. 1587)

-documents concerning endowment of the school and almshouses, 1579, 1590, 1625, 18th-c. copies, Bp. Sch. 23.

Hawkshead (1585)

-statutes, 1588, Bp. Sch. 25.

Heath (c. 1585)

-letters patent, 1585, Halifax, West Yorkshire Archives Calderdale, HTH 1-6.

Hemsworth (1546)

-Archbishop Holgate's will regarding school 1555, Bp. Sch. 26.

Hertford (1616)

-papers relating to the Free Grammar School at Hertford, 1616-1671 (including rules, classroom prayers, and a description of the timetable), BL Add MS 33578.

Hexham (1598)

-foundation charter, 1598, later copy, Bp. Sch. 28.

Ilkley (1607)

-various documents relating to the school, 1607, Bp. Sch. 30.

Ipswich (before 1477)

-statues, 1571, in I.E. Gray and W.E. Potter, *Ipswich School 1400-1950* (Ipswich, W.E. Harrison & Sons, 1950), 39-40.

Kirkby Stephen (1566)

-letters patent 1565 and 1573 18th-c. copies, Bp. Sch. 33.

Ludlow (1552)

-applications for the post of schoolmaster, early 17th c, Shropshire Record Office, Shrewsbury, LB7/1-4.

Magdalen College School, Oxford (1480)

-John Stanbridge's copy of Cicero's *Epistolae Familiares*, Venice, 1485, Magdalen College Old Library, Oxford, Arch.B.III.1.13.

-John Stanbridge's copy of *Vitae Illustriorum Viri*, 1478 (2 vol), Magdalen College Old Library, B.III.4.4-5.

-Libri Computi, 1481-1882, yearly accounts of school expenditure, Magdalen College Archives, Oxford.

-Admission Registers, recording college events and leases of college lands, rather than those of the school, Magdalen College Archives, EL/1.

-Robert Whittinton's *Syntaxis*, 1523, and John Stanbridge's *Vocabula*, 1518, Magdalen College School Library.

Malpas (1527)

-foundation deed 1527, Cheshire and Chester Archives, Chester, DCH/C/446.

Middleton (1572)

-letters patent re-founding school 1572, Lancashire RO, DDX 655/1-2.

Morpeth (1552)

-Edward VI's letters patent to Morpeth Grammar School, 1552, TNA, FEC1/1648.

Northleach (1559)

-will of Hugh Westwood, 1559, granting land to the school and containing specifications regarding the schoolmaster's duties, Gloucestershire Archives, P77CH 1/1.

-revision of statutes, 1607, Gloucestershire Archives, GDR S1/11.

Northwich (Sir John Deane's- aka Witton- 1558)

-statutes 1558, Cheshire Archives, SL 330/2/32.

-names of the headmasters of Witton School 1561-1823, Cheshire Archives, SL 300/12/50.

-Sir John Deane's will, 1563, Cheshire Archives, SL 300/13/23.

-payments to the school 1578-1629, Cheshire Archives, SL 300/4/1.

Nuneaton (1553)

- accounts of School Bailiffs, 1560-1608, Warwickshire Record Office, Warwick, H1/24.

- translation of Edward VI's letters patent for Nuneaton School, 1553, Warwickshire RO, H1/22.

- copy of the orders for regulating the school at Nuneaton, Warwickshire RO, H1/36.

- transcripts of the early governors' accounts, Nuneaton, 17th c., Warwickshire RO, H1/52.

Old Malton (1546)

-foundation charter printed in *A Copy of the Foundation of the Free Grammar School of Old Malton* (Malton: H. Smithson, 1869).

Ripon (1555)

-foundation charter 1555, York, Borthwick, RGS/A/1/4.

-document concerning former chantry lands to be given to the school, Borthwick, RGS/F/1/1.

-statutes and ordinances, 1814, following 1555 charter, Borthwick, RGS/A/2/1.

Rivington (1566)

-miscellaneous documents relating to the school, 1560-19th c., Lancashire RO, DDX 94/163.

-statutes and charter, Lancashire RO, DDX/94/177.

-documents related to Rivington School copied by Rev. J.W. Whitaker 16th-19th c., Lancashire RO, DDBK9/17.

St Alban's (1553)

- Robyns v. Day re debt for board etc of scholars of St Albans's grammar school, 1558-79, TNA, C3/155/109.

St Bee's (1583)

-statutes, 1583 in Carlisle, *Concise Description*, I, 153-163.

- letters patent, 1585, Cumbria Archives, Whitehaven, YDS 60/2.
- register book for school governors, 1585-c. 1830, Cumbria Archives, YDS 60/1.
- letters patent from James I granting lands to the school 1604, Cumbria Archives, YDS 60/3.

St Paul's (re-founded 1512)

- John Colet's statutes, 1512, printed in Carlisle, *Concise Description*, II 71-79.

St Peter's (York) see York

Skipton (1548)

- endowment deed, 1548, North Yorkshire Archives, Northallerton, PR/BNA/18/1/1.

Shrewsbury (1552)

- Regestrum Scholarium 1562-1635, Shropshire Record Office, Shrewsbury, D 35.7; also in E. Calvert, *Shrewsbury School Regestrum Scholarium, 1562-1635* (Shrewsbury: Adnitt & Naunton, 1892).
- A History of Shrewsbury School from the Blakeway Manuscripts, Shropshire RO, XLS11844.
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- "Notes from the Records of St John's College, Cambridge", on the links between the school and the college, Shropshire RO, XLS16285.
- record of books given to the school after 1608 by second master John Baker, TNA, PROB 11/111/26.

Stratford-upon-Avon (c. 1295, re-founded 1553)

- appointment of Simon Hunt as master of Stratford School, 1571, Shakespeare Birthplace Trust, Stratford-upon-Avon, DR 406/16.
- citation of Richard Hunt for teaching without licence at Stratford, 1616, Shakespeare Birthplace Trust, DR 406/17.
- "Manuscript of Shakespeare's Grammar; Copy of grammar of 1540, translation of 1553 charter for King Edward VI School", late 19th c., Shakespeare Birthplace Trust, ER 82/6/81.

Tadcaster (1596)

- statutes, 1596 18th-c. copy, Bp. Sch. 45.

Wakefield (1591)

- foundation charter and statutes, 1591, Bp. Sch. 46.
- schoolmaster nominations, 1607, Borthwick, NOM.SM 1607/1.

Warrington (Sir Thomas Boteler's- 1526)

- foundation deed, 1526, later copy, Cheshire Archives, SL 382/18/1.

Wells (a cathedral school, but still providing instruction in grammar- 909)

- Ailmer v. The Dean and Chapter of Wells re mastership of the grammar school of Wells, 1544-1551, TNA, CI/1192/7-8.

Whalley (before 1548)

- letters patent confirming 1549 grant, 1570/1, Lancashire RO, DDX 250/2.
- certificate as to the grammar school at Whalley, 1569-70, TNA, E/178/492.

Winchester (1382)

- list of scholars in T. F. Kirby, *Winchester Scholars: A List of the Wardens, Fellows, and Scholars of Saint Mary College of Winchester, near Winchester, Commonly Called Winchester College* (London: H. Frowde, 1888).
- recommendations of new masters and ushers 1571-96, Winchester College Archives, 23441-23449.
- Archbishop Bancroft's Injunctions to the warden and scholars on his Metropolitan visitation of Winchester diocese, 1608, Win. Coll. 251.
- results of the Episcopal visitation of Bishop Horne of Winchester, Win Coll., 23258.
- student's notebook, c. 17th c., Win Coll., 24954.
- Liber Successionis et Dignitas* 1386-1640 listing entrances to the school, matriculation at New College, and eventual careers of the students, Win. Coll., 21584.
- BL Add. MS 4379, exercises made by William Badger c. 1565.
- timetable, 1530, printed in Leach, *Educational Charters and Documents*, 448-51.

Witton see Northwich**Worcester (1561)**

- on the appointment and wages of the schoolmasters and ushers of the school at Worcester 1627-28, TNA, E134/3ChasI/Mich24.

Yarm (1590)

-royal charter, 1590, and 'orders', 1609, 18th-c. copies, Bp. Sch. 52.

York (Archbishop Holgate's- 1547)

-foundation charter, 1546/7, Bp. Sch. 53.

York (St Peter's- 627, re-founded 1557)

-re-foundation charter of 1557, 17th-c. copy, Bp. Sch. 54.

List of Abbreviations

BL	<i>British Library</i>
Bp. Sch.	<i>Bishopthorpe Papers, Borthwick Institute for Archives, York</i>
EEBO	<i>Early English Books Online</i>
ODNB	<i>Oxford Dictionary of National Biography</i>
RO	<i>Record Office</i>
TNA	<i>The National Archives, Kew</i>
Win. Coll.	<i>Winchester College Archives</i>

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The name of the printer and the publication date are given here.

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- Bp.Sch. 25 original foundation charter for Hawkeshead Grammar School, 1588.
- Bp.Sch. 28 copy of Elizabeth I's foundation charter to Hexham Grammar School, 1598.
- Bp.Sch. 33 Elizabeth I's letters patent for Kirkby Stephen Grammar School, 1565 and 1573, 18th-century copies.
- Bp. Sch. 45 18th-century copy of Tadcaster Grammar School statutes, 1596.
- Bp.Sch. 46 copy of Elizabeth I's foundation charter and statutes for Wakefield Grammar School, 1591.
- Bp. Sch. 53, Archbishop Holgate's Grammar School foundation charter, 1546/47.
- Bp.Sch. 54 17th- century copy of Phillip and Mary's charter to St Peter's School, York, 1557.
- Borthwick, NOM.SM 1607/1 schoolmaster nomination for Wakefield Grammar School.
- Borthwick, RGS/A/1/4 Ripon Grammar School charter, 1555, later translation.
- Borthwick, RGS/A/2/1 1814 statutes and ordinances following 1555 charter for Ripon Grammar School.

Borthwick, RGS/F/1/1 document concerning former chantry lands to be given to Ripon School.

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BL Add. MS 25426, Statutes and ordinances for the school of Dorchester, 1652.

BL Add. MS 33578, Papers relating to the Free Grammar School at Hertford, 1616-1671.

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